



# General Framework for Gender Equality in Jordan

Economic & Social Council of Jordan and  
the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and  
the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

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## **Preface:**

The advent of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had marked impacts on Jordan's economic and social situation. At the economic level, the unemployment rate has risen at an unprecedented pace, while at the social level, one of the most significant impacts has been for Jordanian women. In this context, the report provides a general framework to assess the reality of Jordanian women along three pillars, in a bid to assist decision-makers to enact the necessary measures to enhance the contributions of Jordanian women in various fields and enable them to overcome the societal and practical obstacles they encounter.

The report aims to serve as a reference for researchers in the field of women's rights by providing an in-depth analysis at the national level, including quantitative and qualitative comparisons of the differences between men and women within Jordan's economic and social environment. Moreover, the purpose of Jordan's Gender Equality Profile (JGEP) is to strengthen national understanding and data on the advancement of international, regional and national commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment. These data will also be a primary source for evidence-driven advocacy and programming for national stakeholders, international development partners and the UN system to advance gains and overcome bottlenecks at the national, regional and global level.

The Jordan's Gender Equality Profile JGEP was developed in an inclusive manner, ensuring participation of the national women's machinery, key ministries, the national statistical office, civil society and gender equality advocates at all levels. Within this, efforts were specifically made to ensure participation was also representative of those marginalized groups most at-risk of being left behind.

## List of acronyms

JGEP	Jordan's Gender Equality Profile
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
FJPD	Family and Juvenile Protection Department
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
	ICT Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women's Empowerment
IUD	Intrauterine device
JAF	Jordanian Armed Forces
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
JOD	Jordanian dinars
JONAP	Jordanian National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PSD	Public Security Directorate
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States dollars
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization

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## Executive summary

Jordan's Gender Equality Profile JGEP provides valuable in-depth analysis of the different social and economic challenges faced by women and girls in Jordan with a view to informing evidence-based decision-making.

The report is divided into three main chapters on different aspects of gender equality, namely: from a legislative and policy perspective, from a statistical perspective, and from the perspective of social views and trends. All three chapters combined aim to illustrate the current reality for diverse Jordanian women.

Chapter 1 deals with current national legislation, as well as relevant amendments and rearticulations over the years, as well as national plans and strategies and international laws and commitments. It highlights progress and what is still needed to strengthen Jordanian women's societal roles and rights, in particular to address the legal and structural challenges they face, such as in the Constitution, Personal Status Laws and with the Nationality Law. It focuses on six key areas of analysis, namely: protection against discrimination, violence against women, women's political participation, women's economic participation, women and health, as well as women and education. It also zeroes in on the challenges faced by specific groups of women who face intersecting forms of discrimination – namely women and girls with disabilities, refugee women and girls, and the girl child.

Chapter 2 goes on to detail the gender data and official statistics currently available in the Kingdom, particularly according to specific Sustainable Development Goal indicators, noting where there are gaps. These largely quantitative data that are disaggregated by gender cover the areas of demographics, health and well-being, disability, education, economic participation, political participation, gender-based violence, as well as on issues such as child labour, child marriage and women migrant workers. Recommendations include the need to: develop the national statistical system, including through specialized training; provide comprehensive, periodic, high-quality and gender-sensitive indicators in different areas; invest in national surveys and studies and make them available to decision-makers; as well as to improve data-collection on gender-based violence.

To shed light on prevailing social norms, perspectives and trends, Chapter 3 examines gender equality in the social realm through qualitative analysis with a number of individuals from governmental and non-governmental entities working in the field. The methodology involved six focus group discussions with groups of 10–12 female and male participants each, with three divided by region (north, central and south), and three targeting female and male service-providers, as well as male and female youth. Next, to reflect on efforts and remaining challenges, in-depth interviews involved 15 key

stakeholders, primarily from government. Recommendations include the need to: ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the policies of public sector institutions, with proper capacity-building and follow-up on their implementation; adapt educational curricula; amend labour, personal status, penal and electoral laws; improve reporting and increase awareness of protection and support services for vulnerable women and survivors of gender-based violence; and create special programmes to spur women's economic and political participation, as well as to promote the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

We sincerely hope that this compilation of data, legal information, social perspectives, analysis and recommendations to address myriad gender-specific challenges will serve to inspire advocacy and inform evidence-based legal reforms, as well as policies and programmes to help Jordan achieve its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Chapter 1: Gender equality from a policy and legislative perspective

### Summary:

This chapter includes an analysis of the legislation related to women's rights and focuses on key aspects, often using indicators to measure equality between the sexes and the gender gap in areas including:

- Protection against discrimination
- Violence against women
- Political participation
- Economic participation
- Women and health
- Women and education

In addition to the study and analysis of women in general, certain females may be subject to multiple forms of discrimination by virtue of belonging to these specific groups:

- Women and girls with disabilities
- Refugee women and girls
- Girl child

In the context of the analysis of legislation and policies, emphasis has been placed on laws that have a direct, clear and explicit impact on gender equality and women's rights, in relation to the above-mentioned topics, while emphasizing that all legislation concerns women as they are citizens and equal partners of men in all matters of life. In this area, the authors have tried to focus on legislation that has either directly or indirectly discriminated against women, affecting their participation, influence and contribution to the progress of their country and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and affecting their role as partners in bringing about change (whether positively or negatively).

The chapter begins with the topic of protection against discrimination and the constitutional principle of equality and non-discrimination. It details the importance of the prohibition of discrimination and the explicit protection of the principle of gender equality in the Jordanian Constitution, which represents a framework for national values, and this should also be reflected in national legislation.

It is worth mentioning that Jordan has ratified many international human rights conventions that oblige States parties to ensure equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Cabinet approved the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025), which renews the Jordanian Government’s commitment to empowering women and protecting their rights and signals the Government’s commitment to adopting a participatory methodology in its implementation of such rights. It is noteworthy that the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) led the preparation of the strategy with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Despite Jordan’s concerted efforts, there is still a need to complete the review process to ensure that all legislation is devoid of any article that discriminates against women, including in the Nationality Law, the Residency and Foreigners Act, the Penal Code and the Personal Status Law.

There is no doubt that women’s political participation and their presence in decision-making positions has seen significant progress and transformation in the past two decades, both qualitatively and quantitatively, but that is still considered insufficient and below expectations. Women do not hold many leadership positions in the public sector, and there are a limited number of women serving as Secretaries-General of Ministries. The percentage of women serving in the Government as Ministers varies, depending on the direction taken by the Prime Minister upon forming their Cabinet. It is worth mentioning that legislation and laws governing political life – such as on elections, parties, municipalities and decentralization – do adopt the principle of positive discrimination in women’s representation. However, they do not systematically function in an organized manner to lay the groundwork for a supportive political, social and cultural environment to empower women to assume decision-making positions – especially high-level positions, which are historically exclusive to men in Jordan, the most important of which are the Premiership of the Government, Parliament or the Judicial Council.

Looking at women’s economic participation, the participation rate is among the most important challenges to achieving gender equality. It must be recognized that the ability of the Jordanian economy to create sufficient employment opportunities relative to the number of new entrants to the market is still limited and below what is required. Moreover, women’s high level of education has not been positively reflected in their entry into the labour market. The fundamental role played by laws, regulations and policies in creating the appropriate circumstances to increase women’s economic participation, cannot be ignored. However, the foremost challenge that remains is follow-up on the implementation of those laws and regulations and availing the required budgets and resources needed to enforce them.

On the subject of violence against women, the chapter focuses on analysis of the Penal Code, which does not contain a definition of violence against women or domestic or family violence. Rather, it stipulated the penalty for some crimes of sexual assault (if they

were committed by a family member) and criminalized many acts of violence against women (including harassment, interpreted as an Indecent Act, but without naming it). The chapter also includes an analysis of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, which assigns responsibility to the Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD) to implement the majority of its provisions, although it is considered a law focused on protection rather than criminalization. Additionally, a number of strategies and plans prepared by the Jordanian Government in partnership with several entities, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and international partners are presented, demonstrating an interest in combating violence against women within the family, with a focus on the protection aspect coupled with prevention-related efforts.

Although the Jordanian Constitution does not expressly provide for women's right to health, Article 6, paragraph 5, mentions that the law protects motherhood and childhood. The Jordanian Health Law also states that the Ministry of Health works to achieve health care for women and children by providing them with necessary services, including care for the mother and her child, in accordance with reproductive health requirements and other health matters related to family planning. Unrelenting efforts are being made at the level of pertinent national strategies and operational plans to provide health-care services using the best methods. Jordan continues providing information, counselling and quality family planning, especially in remote areas and for marginalized groups. Jordan also seeks to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality by analysing the information of the National Maternal Mortality Registry and working to address causes through programmes and services and integrating them into national strategies, policies and programmes for universal health coverage.

Jordan supports the education of women and girls at the public and private levels, which is one of the most prominent indicators of equality between men and women in Jordan. Jordan today enjoys a large degree of equality in the field of education. The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (2018–2022) also includes indicators related to both sexes.

In terms of specific groups of women who may face compounding obstacles, the legislative environment related to the rights of persons with disabilities in Jordan has evolved over the years, through amendments to the Constitution and related laws, and through strategies and policies that have tried to conform to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. Jordan ratified all articles of the Convention in 2008, without any reservations. It also enacted the first comprehensive law for people with disabilities in 1993, developed the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2007–2015), and adopted the current Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law (No. 20 of 2017). Considered the first law of its kind on discrimination against persons with disabilities in the region, it focuses on inclusion and requires all ministries and

public institutions to address issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities within specific time frames, as well as to prohibit all forms of physical and psychological violence against them.

It should be noted that in 2022, Article 6 of the Constitution was amended to delete the text of paragraph 5 and replace it with the following text: *“The law protects the rights of persons with disabilities and promotes their rights, participation and integration in various aspects of life.”* Paragraph 5 also stipulates that *“the law protects motherhood, childhood and old age, takes care of youth and people with disabilities, and protects them from abuse and exploitation.”*

Although Jordan is a non-signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (which recognizes the international scope of the refugee crises and the need for international cooperation), in accordance with the principle of burden-sharing among Member States, the Jordanian Constitution still stipulated in Article 21, paragraph 1, that: *“political refugees shall not be extradited on account of their political beliefs or for their defense of liberty”*.<sup>1</sup> Jordan has been one of the most welcoming countries of refugees throughout its 100-year history. The Syrian Crisis Response Plan is considered by the Government to be the only reference for identifying the needs required to reduce the impact of hosting Syrian refugees, supporting host communities and supporting the Treasury, as the Plan covers seven key sectors. It must be noted that after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021–2023 Response Plan was updated, with a new article related to the pandemic response added to the main articles.

With reference to the girl child, Jordan has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But in the absence of a law on the rights of the child, a number of laws relating to girls rights have been analysed, such as the Personal Status Law, the Penal Code, the Juvenile Code and other related recommendations.

## **Introduction:**

Jordan is constantly engaged in a process of political and legislative reform in partnership and dialogue with several components of Jordanian society. This process is proceeding at varying speeds and is affected by several challenges, the most notable of which are regional challenges, such as security issues and political instability, the influx of large numbers of refugees into its territory, in addition to internal challenges related to limited resources. Other challenges include the existence of a culture that does not support gender equality but views the relationship between women and men hierarchically. At the same time, the presence of early political will to commit to implementing the

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<sup>1</sup> The Second Chapter of the Jordanian Constitution of the year 1958 and its amendments, “The Rights and Duties of Jordanians”, has been widely amended, as is the case with many other chapters of the Constitution of 2001.

SDGs, and the support of international partners, United Nations bodies and UN Women have all helped Jordan to face these challenges through reforms and by reviewing its legislation. Yet these efforts have not yet been sufficient to achieve all the aspired goals for achieving gender equality. The COVID-19 pandemic poses an additional challenge, but that does not mean all hope is lost, because experience has shown that persistence, cooperation, coordination, networking and dialogue between concerned parties achieves results, especially if these efforts interact with and influence public opinion, for example, as seen with the repeal of Article 308 of the Penal Code. To succeed, goals must be achieved by involving targeted groups, such as women survivors of violence, women migrant workers, women with disabilities, elderly women, girls and others, alongside men, in their planning and implementation. The slogan “Leave No One Behind” should not be limited to the first step but it must continue on through to the monitoring and evaluation phase.

Jordan has submitted reports to the treaty body committees involved in monitoring the implementation of international human rights conventions, in addition to reports for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that are submitted to the Human Rights Council, and its Voluntary National Report (VNR) on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, it formed the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women (IMC). It approved the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025) and it submitted its international reports to United Nations treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee Against Torture, and it initiated a participatory process to review the Comprehensive National Human Rights Plan.

This chapter contains an analysis of laws and policies related to women’s rights and issues, and each section includes an analysis of legislation (the Constitution, laws and regulations), national strategies and plans, and the recommendations of United Nations treaty bodies related to women. Each section concludes with a number of recommendations that the authors consider relevant to achieving gender equality, eliminating discrimination and violence against women and achieving SDG 5 on gender equality. The chapter emphasizes that all national legislation and strategies concern and affect all citizens, women and men alike, which is why this chapter is devoted to examining their direct impact on women, since laws and policies can either guarantee equal rights or leave some open to discrimination and violence, which is something that also affects men, as everyone has a role to play in, and a benefit to obtain from, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and gender equality.

## **1. Protection against discrimination:**

The constitutional protection of the principle of equality is one of the most important forms of protection and all States seek to place this right at the forefront, as is the

case with the Jordanian Constitution of 1952 and its amendments. Article 6 of the first paragraph of the Constitution, concerning the right to equality, stipulates that: “Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards to their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion”. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender is not explicitly stated, but rather a limited subset of prohibited grounds of discrimination are detailed in Article 6/1 of the Constitution, namely: race, language or religion – although it should be noted that forms of discrimination based on language are almost negligible in Jordanian society, especially when compared with discrimination on the basis of gender. Several Jordanian human rights organizations have addressed the Royal Commission for the Amendment of the Constitution, which was formed in 2011 to amend Article 6 of the Constitution with the addition of the word “gender” as one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination. This point was subsequently included in Jordan’s fifth period report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, submitted on 5 July 2016, which stated that: “*the fact that the criterion of sex is not mentioned in this article is not a shortcoming as the Constitution is a general text that applies to both males and females*”.<sup>2</sup> Jordan reiterated this interpretation in its sixth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, submitted in 2016, and in response to Recommendation 14 of the CEDAW Committee, to include the word “gender” in Article 6 of the Constitution, reiterating in this respect what was stated in previous reports, adding that the absence of “gender” terminology in this article is not a form of discrimination between citizens, as all the rights in the Constitution granted to men are the same very rights that are granted to women. Additionally, a reiteration of a 2011 statement by the Royal Commission on the Amendment of the Constitution was issued to emphasize that the term “Jordanians”, wherever used, shall include women and men alike and without any discrimination whatsoever.<sup>3</sup>

However, human rights organizations continue to argue that gender equality should be explicitly provided for in the Constitution, on the basis that explicit provisions constitute the strongest obligation for the State to address inequalities and that neutral texts weaken the possibility of equality in both law and practice. The Constitution represents a national values framework from which legislation and other policies and strategies are inspired. It helps to shape the public culture and form the official and civil culture. It is also a tool for assessing the work of institutions and legislation, as well as a commitment to achieve results and impact that can cause the State to review its policies, collect

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2 Human Rights Committee. 2016. Fifth periodic reports submitted by States parties due in 2014: Jordan. CCPR/C/JOR/5, document GE16-12985E, 5 July. p. 29. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CCPR%2fC%2fJOR%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CCPR%2fC%2fJOR%2f5&Lang=en)

3 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). 2015. Sixth periodic report of States parties due in 2016: Jordan. CEDAW/C/JOR/6, document 10445-15E, 25 June. p. 11. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CEDAW%2fC%2fJOR%2f6&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CEDAW%2fC%2fJOR%2f6&Lang=en)

gender equality information and data and integrate this concept in its strategy and in all of its work. This is especially important as this form of discrimination impacts the marginalization of women, weakens their role in their country's progress, and as societal patterns that discriminate against women and impede women's access to social justice. It is also important that the constitutional text explicitly include gender equality as one of the guarantees of access to justice before the national judiciary, and that women and victims can use it every time their rights are violated by an unconstitutional law.

Despite extensive amendments in recent years, as of 2021, Jordan's Constitution did not contain any direct provision for women's rights, except Article 23/2/4, which states that: "*special conditions shall be made for the employment of women and juveniles*".<sup>4</sup> This is similar to the constitutions of several Arab State countries that have updated their constitutions over the same time period.

However, in January 2022, Jordan made legislative progress in women's more explicit incorporation at the constitutional level. The title of Chapter 2 of the Constitution was changed from "Rights and Duties of Jordanians" to "Rights and Duties of Jordanian Men and Women," specifically including the word "women" for the first time. Chapter 2 of the Constitution deals with all articles related to the rights, freedoms and duties that are the essence of full and equal citizenship: the right to equality before the law, the right to work and education, and the right to family protection. It details the rights of those groups most in need of protection, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Chapter 2 equally lays out personal freedoms, including: the inviolability of private life, the right to bodily integrity, the right to freedom of residence and movement, the right to movable and immovable property, the prohibition of exploitation and forced labour, the freedom to practice religious rites, the freedom of opinion and expression, the right to assembly and to form and join associations and parties, the right to obtain information, the right to confidentiality of correspondence, the right to establish schools, the right to hold public office, etc. It equally details duties, such as to defend the homeland, its territory and the unity of its people, and to maintain social peace, and the duty of serving the homeland in emergency situations.

A new paragraph (No. 6) regarding women was also added as Article 6 of the Constitution, which states: "*The State guarantees the empowerment and support of women to play an active role in building society in a way that guarantees equal opportunities on the basis of justice and equity and protects them from all forms of violence and discrimination.*" This is the first time that special rights for women, in addition to their protection from all forms of violence and discrimination, are explicitly stipulated in the Constitution.

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4 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2011. Constitution.

The right to equality and non-discrimination was already explicit in several international human rights conventions that were ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette in the years 2006–2007, such as:

**1- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)**, which was ratified by Jordan without reservations and published in the Official Gazette in 2006. Article 2/1 of the Covenant prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and other grounds for discrimination in the enjoyment of the rights recognized therefrom. The Covenant also includes a special provision on gender equality (Article 3), under which States Parties undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant. Article 26 of the Covenant is a stand-alone guarantee of equal and effective protection before the law in general and not only in relation to the rights mentioned in the Covenant; it thus constitutes a cornerstone for the right of equality and protection from discrimination, in stating that: *“all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any grounds, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”*<sup>5</sup> What is stated in this article obliges State Parties to respect the right to equality as an independent right, and that the prohibited grounds of discrimination in this article were mentioned, for example, but not limited to, a set of grounds that are open and not closed. It is worth mentioning that Jordan has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights without reservations.

**2- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)**, which was ratified by Jordan without reservations and published in the Official Gazette in 2006, includes provisions that address the right to equality directly. For example, Article 2/2 obliges States parties to ensure that the exercise of the rights provided for in the Covenant is devoid of any discrimination based on race, colour or gender.<sup>6</sup> It also contains a provision on gender equality that obliges States parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social and cultural rights, as well as other articles on equal pay and remuneration for work of equal value.

**3- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)**, which was ratified without reservations by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette in 2006, considers as a form of torture any act that results in severe physical or mental pain or suffering inflicted on a person intentionally, or which

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5 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). 1966. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>

6 OHCHR. 1966. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

is intended to discriminate of any kind, and is carried out, condoned or instigated by a public official.<sup>7</sup>

**4- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)** was ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette in 2007, prior to the discussion of its report to the CEDAW Committee. Jordan has made a number of reservations to certain provisions of this Convention, namely: Article 9/2, Article 15/4 and Article 16/1/C,D,G. Jordan withdrew its initial reservation to Article 15/4 (on equality of the right to movement and choice of place of residence) in 2009 but has maintained its reservations on other articles concerned with equality with regard to the nationality of children, equality between women and men upon marriage, during and after marriage, and equality of rights and responsibilities in matters relating to their children and their roles as parents, regardless of their marital status. Article 1 defines discrimination and in Articles 2 and 3 the Convention commit to several specific things, with the goal to develop a policy aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and take appropriate measures, including enacting legislation to ensure the full development and advancement of women.<sup>8</sup>

**5- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),<sup>9</sup>** which was ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette in 2006, with expressed reservations to articles relating to freedom of religion and belief and to the adoption of children. Jordan did not, however, express any reservations in relation to the article that ensures the right to equality or the right to nationality.

**6- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)** was ratified by Jordan and published in the Official Gazette in 2008. It is also a specialized convention on the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability and refers to the difficult conditions faced by persons with disabilities who are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, etc.<sup>10</sup> Jordan has enacted special legislation for persons with disabilities.

It should be noted that the publication of these international human rights conventions, which oblige States parties to ensure equality on the basis of gender in relation to the rights that they stipulate, or as an independent right, as set out in Article 26 of the

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7 OHCHR. 1984. The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>

8 OHCHR. 1979. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

9 OHCHR. 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

10 OHCHR. 2006. Preamble to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as in the CEDAW Convention, can be used as an argument before the National Judiciary with the possibility of invoking them through litigants, or relying on them in rulings issued by the courts. Although the Jordanian Constitution does not include a text about the legal value of the agreements ratified by the Kingdom, the Jordanian courts have issued rulings based on these international treaties. Examples of such rulings are provided by Jordan in its follow-up to the concluding observations on its fifth periodic report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee on 23 December 2020.<sup>11</sup>

As stated in decision No. 1 of 2020 of the Constitutional Court concerning the interpretation of Article 33 of the Constitution: “[i]nternational treaties have the binding force of their parties and States must respect them, as long as they remain in force, as long as these treaties have been ratified and fulfilled the procedures established for their implementation.”<sup>12</sup> This decision put an end to any controversy about the constitutional value of international treaties in the face of national legislation, and this decision is considered a constitutionalization of the principle of the supremacy of international treaties and agreements over national laws. Interpretative decisions represent a constitutional argument binding on the court itself in its future decisions, on the rest of the State’s authorities, and for all.<sup>13</sup>

However, a significant segment of Jordanian society – including those working in executive, legislative and judicial sectors – views human rights as western values and a means of changing society, and they see them as incompatible with the culture, traditions and values of Jordanian society, thus rejecting this international system and international conventions, particularly those relating to women’s rights and gender equality. Such a culture does not look favourably on human rights conventions, especially the CEDAW Convention, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive Jordanian law on equality and non-discrimination, and in the absence of a provision in the Penal Code that criminalizes and punishes discrimination. No Jordanian legislation contains a definition of prohibited discrimination; only the international human rights conventions ratified by Jordan. Thus, Jordan’s National Strategy for Women (2020–2025) has considered international human rights conventions as its reference point, and the norms, trends and social roles that support gender equality have been identified as its third strategic objective.<sup>14</sup>

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11 Human Rights Committee. 2020. Information received from Jordan on follow-up to the concluding observations on its fifth periodic report.. 23 December. CCPR/C/JOR/FCO/5, document GE.21-01873 A), p. 5.

12 Constitutional Court Decision No. 1 of 2020, published in the Official Gazette no. 5640, dated 11 May 2020.

13 Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. 2020. Information received from Jordan on follow-up to the concluding observations on its fifth periodic report. 19 August. CERD/C/JOR/FCO/18-20. GE20-11145A, p. 4.

14 The National Strategy for Women in Jordan 2020-2025 was approved by the Council of Ministers on March 8, 2020, on the occasion of International Women’s Day. of international and national conventions and commitments related to women’s rights.

## Jordanian legislation and gender-based differences:

### 1- Nationality Law:

The Nationality Law (No. 6 of 1954) regulates original and acquired nationality, and the law contains a number of discriminatory provisions. It grants original nationality by blood to every child born to a Jordanian father and does not recognize the same right for the children of a Jordanian mother. Jordanian women who marry a non-Jordanian cannot obtain Jordanian nationality for their children on the basis of blood, as can the children of a Jordanian man who is married to a foreign woman. This may leave children vulnerable to not being granted citizenship, especially if they are unable to obtain the citizenship of their fathers. This happens even though Article 9 of the Nationality Law states that: *“children of a Jordanian are Jordanian wherever they are born”*<sup>15</sup> without identifying the male Jordanian but stating the term generically. While human rights organizations call for guaranteeing the right to equality between men and women, in relation to the granting of citizenship to their children, these demands have been rejected, reinforced by the Government’s refusal to remove its reservation to Article 9 of the CEDAW Convention.

In order to resolve this human rights controversy, the Council of Ministers decided in 2014 to issue a resolution on the privileges of the children of Jordanian women which included the approval of certain benefits related to health, school education, driving a car and the issuance of identification cards for the children of Jordanian women<sup>16</sup>. According to Jordan’s fifth report to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 2016,<sup>17</sup> the number of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians is estimated at 88,983 with another 355,932 of their children entitled to access these benefits. According to Jordan’s report, this is a large number that represents a burden on the public budget, as the financial cost is about 63,000,000 Jordanian dinars (JOD).

The absence of a nationality results in difficulties related to residency, university admissions, university fees, membership in professional unions, and other matters related to the lives of Jordanian women and their children. It also directly affects the right of women to choose their husbands, as marriage to a foreigner entails legal obligations to the spouse and children who are treated as foreigners, whereas such obligations do not arise when a Jordanian man is married to a woman who is a foreigner.

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15 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 1954. Nationality Law No. 6.

16 Instructions were issued to implement Cabinet decisions related to granting children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians access to facilities for the year 2018, which were published in the Official Gazette No. 5531 on 17 September 2018.

17 Human Rights Committee. 2016. Fifth periodic reports submitted by States parties due in 2014: Jordan. CCPR/C/JOR/5. p. 7.

Another discriminatory aspect of Jordan's Nationality Law is that a foreign-born woman who marries a Jordanian man has the right to obtain citizenship under certain conditions, while a foreign-born man who marries a Jordanian woman does not have the same right.

## **2- Family relationships:**

According to Articles 103, 104, 105, 106, 108 and 109 of the Jordanian Constitution, Religious Courts are competent to deal with matters of personal status; Sharia Courts are competent only in matters of personal status when the opponents are Muslims; and it becomes the competence of the Councils of the other Religious Denominations, when the opponents are non-Muslims.

The Personal Status Law (No.15 of 2019)<sup>18</sup> regulates the personal status matters of Muslims, including: betrothal, marriage, annulment, divorce, alimony, guardianship, custody of children, custodianship and visitation, inheritance, proof of parentage and *deya* (blood money obtained at the cost of a life). The Personal Status Law requires the consent of the guardian (i.e., the father), to the marriage of his eldest daughter in principle, and the guardianship over the children is granted to the father. Divorce provisions are different between men and women, and the law allows polygamy according to specific controls.

Although the law stipulates that the age of marriage is 18 years, exceptions have been made in accordance with regulations, allowing the marriage of males and females reaching age 16, which has been the subject of considerable controversy among legal and legislative institutions, as well as between the upper and lower houses of Parliament. Girls make up the vast majority of the proportion of married minors in Jordan, according to the statistical report issued by the Supreme Judges Department. With reference to Christians, the personal status issues of members of Christian denominations are subject to debate and discussion in the absence of a single legal reference. Additionally, the Personal Status Laws of some denominations are not published in the Official Gazette and covered either by old Byzantine or Ottoman laws which do not set a minimum age for betrothal and marriage.

## **3- The Jordanian Evidence Law and its amendments:**

The Jordanian Evidence Law (No. 30 of 1952) and its amendments,<sup>19</sup> and the Code of Criminal Procedures' third chapter on evidence, do not make any distinction between women and men in criminal proceedings in relation to testimony. Both can testify equally before the regular judiciary in criminal and human rights cases and before a public notary. However, in some cases, discrimination between women and men in testimony before Sharia Courts has been established as the prevailing norm.

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<sup>18</sup> Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2019. Personal Status Law No. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 1952. Jordanian Evidence Law No. 30 of 1952 and its amendments.

#### **4- The Passports Law (No. 2 of 1969) and its amendments:**

While the law does not discriminate between women and men in how to obtain a passport, Article 11 of the law is discriminatory in terms of who can be included under another person's passport, as it states: *"an ordinary passport when issued may include the wife or wives of the holder and his minor children under the age of 16 who are descendants of a Jordanian father"*.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, according to the electronic passport renewal service application form, the guardian (father/mother) has the right to submit an application for the renewal of the passport electronically, while a divorcee/widow must present a temporary guardianship document issued in relation to the minor in a Sharia court.

#### **5- The Residency and Foreigners Affairs Law (No. 24 of 1973) and its amendments:**

The law does not include a provision granting a foreigner who marries a female Jordanian the right to permanent residence, as is the case with regard to her sons and daughters, nor does it recognize the right for all of them to work. And indeed, there are cases in which the Ministry of Interior has refused to grant the husband and children of Jordanian women residency in Jordan.

#### **6- The Penal Code (No. 16 of 1960) and its amendments:**

Although the Penal Code contains a number of provisions dealing with crimes of sexual assault against women and minors, which it considers to be among the most serious crimes and felonies, it does not contain a provision criminalizing discrimination according to the definitions of the international human rights conventions ratified by Jordan – which oblige Member States to prohibit discrimination and to take legislative measures to that end. The Penal Code even distinguishes between women and men in a number of its articles:

1. For example, by criminalizing the act of adultery and not making it a public right offence, a Public Prosecutor can only proceed with a criminal case with a complaint from the husband or wife, or if the complaint is submitted by the woman's guardian, as stated in Article 284 of the Code.<sup>21</sup>
2. In another example, Article 340 of the Code is discriminatory when it comes to mitigated charges for murder in cases involving adultery, which used to only be allowed for men, but which was amended to grant the same right to women: *"[a]n excuse to kill. (1) (A) mitigated excuse shall be used by a person who surprises his wife, one of his ascendants, descendants or sisters when she is caught in the act of adultery or in an illegal bed and kills her at once, kills her adulterer or kills them together, or attacks one or both of them in an attack resulting in injury, harm, permanent disability or death. 2. The same excuse is used by a wife who surprised her husband when she*

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20 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Passports Law No. 2 of 1969 and its amendments.

21 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 and its amendments.

*caught him in the act of adultery or in an illegal bed in the marital home, killing him immediately, killing the adulterer, killing them both, or assaulting one or both of them, resulting in injury, harm, permanent disability or death. 3. A. The right of legitimate self-defense may not be used against those who avail themselves of this excuse. (B) The provisions of aggravating circumstances shall not apply to those who benefit from a mitigating excuse.”*

3. However, despite the addition of a mitigated excuse for women to kill, this article continues to be criticized by human rights organizations because it gives a license to kill, whether the murder is committed against women or men, knowing that the majority of victims of family murders and killing among spouses are of women and girls perpetuated by men and boys. This article also distinguishes between the husband and the wife in terms of determining the place of committing the crime, as the wife only benefits from a mitigating excuse if she is surprised by her husband committing adultery in the marital home, while the husband benefits from a mitigating excuse without specifying the place of committing the act of adultery, and this distinction has been justified by the fact that a man may have more than one wife. Another distinction in this article is that men benefit from a mitigating excuse not only against their wives, but also if they kill one of their ancestors, descendants or sisters in the event of being caught in the act of adultery.
4. Articles 321–325 of the Penal Code criminalize abortion and women who abort themselves, including those who benefit from a mitigating excuse (if it is committed in the interests of preserving their honour), or if it is committed by a person to maintain the honour of one of their descendants or relatives up to the third degree. Women who have an abortion as a result of sexual assault do not benefit from a mitigating excuse and do not get exempted from punishment.

The Jordanian Penal Code has also made links in more than one of its articles between women, honour and virginity. For example, Article 304/1 states that: *“anyone who deceives a woman over the age of 18 by promising to marry her and causes her to lose her virginity or causes her to get pregnant shall be punished – if his act does not require a more severe penalty – by imprisonment from six months up to three years and if her previous virginity can be guaranteed.”*

## **7- The Civil Service Bylaw:**

Some articles of the Civil Service Bylaw of 2020<sup>22</sup> provide for respect for the principle of equality in general, such as Article 4, which establishes the principle of justice, equality and equal opportunities, such as taking into account the principles and values that underpin the civil service, or for the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender.

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22 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2020. Civil Service Bylaw of 2020. Official Gazette, No. 5619, p. 697. 2 February.

Article 68/C obliges the public official to treat the public with courtesy and decorum and on the basis of impartiality, neutrality, objectivity and justice without distinction as to gender, race, religious beliefs or any form of discrimination, and paragraph H of the same article establishes respect for the spirit of fellowship, cooperation, knowledge-sharing and respect for the relationship of partnership at work between men and women.

The principle of non-discrimination is generally provided for in Article 67/A of the Bylaw, which emphasizes that: “[w]hen appointed, the staff member shall take the following oath: ‘I swear to God Almighty to work honestly and faithfully, to preserve the property and prestige of the State, and to carry out the functions and duties of my work impartially, neutrally and without discrimination’.” This does not explicitly stipulate the prohibition of harassment, as is the case in the Labour Code, and such a prohibition is important for the protection of women, whether they are colleagues or beneficiaries of the public service. However, this does not mean that there is no prohibition of certain behaviours that constitute harassment. Article 69 prohibits any employee, under penalty of disciplinary responsibility, from any physical or verbal behaviour of a sexual nature, or threats associated with it that affect the dignity of others, may be offensive to them and result in physical, psychological or sexual harm to them.

The Bylaw also distinguishes between a female and a male employee in terms of the entitlement to a family allowance. Article 24/A provides that: “[a] married employee is entitled to a monthly family allowance of 20 dinars, including a widowed and divorced employee who has children under the age of 18; (B) the employee’s family allowance shall be paid if her husband is disabled, or if she is the breadwinner of her children, or she is divorced and does not receive legal alimony for her children and they are not older than 18 years of age”, and there are no provisions prohibiting discrimination in employment between women and men.

### **National institutions monitoring women’s rights and the National Strategy for Women in Jordan:**

Many national institutions monitor the rights and conditions of Jordanian women, such as the JNCW, the National Centre for Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, whose reports include a presentation of women’s rights or contribute to the reports of international human rights mechanisms that monitor Jordan’s implementation of the conventions it has ratified. In addition, several ministries have established their own specialized human rights and gender directorates. The Government has also created the position of the Coordinator for Human Rights, who has a role in the implementation and monitoring of the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights (2016–2025), which includes a main goal to promote and protect women’s rights within the axis of the groups who are most vulnerable to rights violations. On 28 October 2018, the Prime Minister decided to form a High-level Committee, headed by the Minister of Justice and with the

membership of other ministers and officials from national institutions, legislative and judicial authorities and trade unions, as well as the Secretary-General of the JNCW. The Committee focuses on analysing international human rights conventions, contrasting and comparing them with national laws, indicating the need for interventions, amendments or changes, or enacting laws in line with the requirements of international agreements.<sup>23</sup> The Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025) on 8 March 2020, International Women’s Day. This endorsement renews the commitment of the Jordanian Government to empowering women and protecting their rights and indicates its commitment to pursue a participatory implementation of the plan and put it into action. The JNCW led the process of preparing the National Strategy for Women in Jordan with the support of the United Nations, based on the vision of a society that is free from discrimination and gender-based violence, in which women and girls enjoy full human rights and equal opportunities to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development. It reflects national participatory efforts of the various governmental and national institutions, military and security sectors and relevant civil society organizations, as well as the House of Representatives and Senate, trade unions and political parties, and was drafted on the basis of broad national consultations in all governorates.

This consultative process also built on the results of efforts at the beginning of 2019 to prepare a review of progress towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, with the aim of preparing the fifth national report (Beijing+25). This included extensive national consultations on progress towards Jordan’s commitments in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as identifying challenges, obstacles, priorities and renewing commitments by focusing on regional and national data. This report contributed to providing the latest data for indicators related to SDG goals on gender equality and women’s empowerment, while illustrating the information and data available, their sources, and gaps in the provision of data. These gaps are among the most important challenges to the assessment and analysis of the realities of women and girls in Jordan, as they limit the capacity for efficient planning and implementation to promote equality and eliminate gender discrimination in different areas. The strategy’s preparation was based on a theory of change that is based on three factors, namely:

1. Developing the mechanisms of official institutions that promote accountability and participation in responding to gender needs.
2. Creating positive societal norms and roles that are supportive of equality and empowerment of women and rejecting of violence.

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<sup>23</sup> CEDAW Committee. 2018. Information submitted to follow-up on the concluding observations of Jordan’s sixth periodic report. 18 May. CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6/Add. Document 19-14468 /A, p. 2/3.

3. Women inclusion in the process, through their participation and leadership in the public and private sectors.

**The strategy was developed through the following five stages:**

- Identifying national and international commitments, gaps and challenges
- Holding individual and group interviews and participatory and consultative sessions in the governorates and at the national level
- Developing the logical framework and preparing the draft strategy
- Developing operational plans and the follow-up and evaluation framework
- Reviewing and approving the strategy

**The position of international human rights treaty bodies and their observations made to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regarding ensuring the right to equality on the basis of gender:**

The Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report submitted by Jordan to the CEDAW Committee, which were adopted by the committee at its sixty-sixth session (13 February–13 March 2017), recommended that Jordan adopt comprehensive legislation on gender equality that includes the prohibition of discrimination against women, in accordance with Articles 1–2 of the Convention. They recommended amending Jordan’s Constitutional Court Act of 2012 to enable stakeholders to challenge laws deemed to be incompatible with the Constitution and international legal obligations. They also recommended reviewing the Nationality Law to ensure equality between women and men with respect to the acquisition and change of nationality, and to enable Jordanian women to grant their nationality to their foreign husbands and children born into such marriages. In the area of personal status, the Committee recommended ensuring the equal rights of men and women in relation to marriage and divorce and prohibiting the practice of underage marriage among all groups of society, in order to give priority to the interests of girls and their right to education. The Committee called for the appointment of female judges in Sharia Courts, the empowerment of girls and women to exercise their right to inheritance on an equal basis with their male counterparts, and the enactment of legal provisions to ensure that after the dissolution of a marriage women can enjoy the same rights as men. In relation to personal property,<sup>24</sup> it recommended that Jordan withdraw its reservations made upon ratification of the Convention to Article 9/2 and Article 16 (1) C, D, and G and intensify its discussions with religious leaders and religious scholars, taking into thorough consideration best practices in the region and the Organization of Islamic Conference member countries, in order to overcome any objections to the withdrawal of such reservations.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> CEDAW Committee. 2017. Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report by Jordan. CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6 document 17-03877/A, p. 6/25.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

As mentioned in the Concluding Observations on Jordan's fifth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee on 4 December 2017, despite of the first paragraph of Article 6 of the Constitution (which provides for equality before the law), the Committee regretted the absence of a full legislation that fights discrimination and includes all of the grounds set forth in the Convention.

Jordan also received several recommendations during the presentation of its third Universal Periodic Review to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2018, including: the need to provide a legal basis for equality between women and men; to amend Article 6 of the Constitution to explicitly prohibit gender-based discrimination; and to lift the reservations to Article 9/2 of the CEDAW Convention.<sup>26</sup>

### **Authors' recommendations relating to protection and discrimination:**

- Amend the text of the first paragraph of Article 6 of the Constitution by adding the word "gender," which it currently does not refer to within the non-discrimination criteria specified, namely language, religion and race.
- Adopt a comprehensive law on equality and non-discrimination.
- Amend the Penal Code to criminalize discrimination and punish and criminalize incitement to violence and discrimination.
- Encourage legal experts to use international human rights conventions before national courts and to cite them in judicial decisions.
- Complete the review of national legislation and amend articles that discriminate against women and run counter to the international human rights conventions ratified by the Kingdom.
- Ensure an equal right to nationality, enable Jordanian women's children and foreign-born husbands to acquire the nationality of their mothers on an equal basis with men, and lift the reservation on Article 9/1 of the CEDAW Convention.

## **2. Political participation:**

As the Kingdom concludes the first centennial of the establishment of the modern Jordanian State and prepares to chart its national progress, opinions vary on the success of political reform in general and on Jordan's progress towards a true democracy that is inclusive and representative of all segments of society. There is no doubt that women's political participation and their presence in decision-making positions has seen significant improvement over the past two decades, both in quality and quantity, but their representation is still insufficient and below expectations.

According to the first objective of the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025): *"women and girls are able to access their human, economic and political rights,*

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council. N.D. Website. <https://www.ohchr.org/AR/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=23827&LangID=A>

*to participate and lead freely in a society free from gender-based discrimination*". The Strategy includes among its performance indicators related to political participation the percentage of women in legislative, executive (administrative) and judicial positions, and even though Article 22, paragraph 1, of the Jordanian Constitution stipulates that: *"every Jordanian has the right to hold public office under the conditions specified in the law or regulations"*. It must be pointed out that in the 2020 parliamentary elections, there were 365 women out of 1,717 candidates, bringing their representation up to 21.4%. This was an increase of 1.4% over the 2016 elections (wherein 257 out of 1,252 candidates were women), which were held under the same Elections Law (No. 6 of 2016), whose Article 9 changed the system to an open list with proportional representation. This contributed to pushing the lists to include at least one woman, and sometimes more, as quotas set no upper limits on the number of women per list.

The same occurred with the Law on the System of Financial Contributions to Support Political Parties (No. 28 of 2019), as the parties rushed to nominate women in the hope of receiving additional support, which was available at a rate of 15% in case of filing a nomination and 20% in case of winning, according to paragraphs A and E of Article 4 of the law. This brought the number of female party candidates reached 73 women for the first time, including only one of three women who assumed the position of Secretary-General of a party, out of 49 licensed parties. It is worth noting that the Political Parties Law (No. 39 of 2015) in force does not require, unlike its predecessor, any specific percentages to guarantee the participation of women, and the increase in the percentage of women candidates was not reflected in the number of seats that women won. In fact, the 2020 parliamentary election results witnessed a decrease in women's representation to only 15 seats – which is the number reserved for women according to Article 8, paragraph B of the electoral law – that is, one seat is reserved for women in each of the 12 governorates of the Kingdom, and for each of the three Badia districts. It was only later on that Tamam Al-Rayati, managed to enter Parliament after a seat in Aqaba was vacated, making her the only non-quota winner of the nineteenth election cycle. The largest percentage of women's representation was in Jordan's eighteenth Parliament (15.4%).

SDG 5.5 seeks to ensure the full and effective participation of women and their equal opportunities with men to occupy leadership positions at all decision-making levels in political, economic and public life.

It was also insufficient to meet the target recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which is 30% as a minimum level of representation. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), in its 2020 review of the progress made on the BPfA after 25 years, identified five key axes on which Arab countries look to improve the situation of women: localizing Beijing's outputs in national

policies, including focusing on the most marginalized women and girls; designing appropriate policies to support them in all of their situations; achieving justice among the sexes in landing proper work opportunities and job promotions; and supporting women in carrying out their dual family and professional roles. The Jordanian National Strategy for Women for the years of 2013–2017 and 2020–2025 adopted a minimum 30% target for women’s representation in politics. However, all attempts and campaigns led by the JNCW, in cooperation with civil society and allies in Parliament and the media, have not managed to increase the number of seats allocated to women to 23 (from the current 15 seats out of 130). That would be equal to the number of electoral districts in the Kingdom, as some major governorates are divided into more than one constituency – namely Amman, which has five constituencies, Irbid with four constituencies and Zarqa with two, and the population of these three governorates is about 74.8% of the Kingdom’s total population. However, women’s representation is limited to only three seats, in accordance with the electoral law in force.<sup>27</sup> It should also be noted that Article 70 of the Constitution requires a candidate to be at least 30 years of age to be a member of the House of Representatives, thus preventing a large proportion of young men and women from running.

The nineteenth extraordinary session of the lower house of Parliament saw only one woman elected to the permanent bureau as assistant to the President, and one woman selected to chair one of the House of Representative’s 15 standing committees – the Women’s Committee, with no woman chairing any of the six Parliamentary Blocs.<sup>28</sup>

The number of women in the Senate formed in 2020 decreased to 8 out of 65 members, compared to the previous Senate’s 10 women out of 65 members. As with the lower house, in the current session of the upper house, only one woman was appointed as an assistant to the President, and only one woman chairs one of the 16 standing committees of the upper house, namely the Women’s Committee.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that the procedures of the Senate and House of Representatives do not provide for any quotas or positive treatment to ensure that women parliamentarians are fairly represented in the permanent bureau, blocs or standing committees and that and throughout the history of both houses no woman has ever been elected or appointed to the position of President of either house.<sup>30</sup>

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27 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2016. Election Law No. 6.

28 Website of the Jordanian Parliament.

29 Website of the Council of the Senate.

30 Rules of procedure of the Senate (2014) and rules of procedure of the House of Representatives and its amendments (2019).

The results of the municipal elections of 2017 showed that women won a large number of seats in the municipal and local councils and the Greater Amman Municipality after elections held on the basis of the Municipal Law and its Amendment (No. 41 of 2015). Article 33, paragraphs A and B stipulated that “no less than 25%” of the members of local and municipal councils should be women – who received the highest number of votes but did not win a seat in the open contest with other candidates – which makes this percentage a minimum level of women’s representation that can be exceeded.<sup>31</sup> And this is what happened, with women’s representation in both local and municipal councils reaching 41%. Given that local and municipal councils have the ability to provide development services to local communities. But what is remarkable is that no woman has been able to reach the presidency of any of the Kingdom’s 99 municipalities, despite six women running for that office. This indicates a societal view that still does not accept women in the top positions associated with control and power. It is worth noting that the position of the presidency of the municipalities is only open to competition, and there is no preference giving women an additional opportunity to win it to ensure fair representation, as is the case with council membership, where 46 women able to head local councils because they got the highest votes compared to the rest of the members. This draws attention to the importance of the electoral system’s method of considering winners as one of the mechanisms to empower women politically.<sup>32</sup>

It must be noted that the Independent Electoral Commission removed women winners by acclamation in the 2017 municipal elections from competition lists, in accordance with its interpretation of Article 33 of the Municipal Law. This greatly limited women winners’ ability to preside over local councils, and thus a path to membership of the municipal councils. Concretely, about 65 women who won by acclamation were deprived of the competing for the presidency of the local council and from membership on the municipal councils, which pushed them to hold a sit-in in front of the Independent Electoral Commission.<sup>33</sup> It also indicates that there is a clear gap in the amended Municipalities Law (No. 41 of 2015), that must be rectified to deal with winning by acclamation.

Looking at the decentralization experience of the recent provincial councils in Jordan, those elections were held for the first time in 2017, based on the provisions of the Decentralization Law (No. 49 of 2015). It should be noted that the project put forward by the Government at the time did not mention the percentage of women’s representation in any form, and that Parliament drafted a special provision on the percentage of women’s representation, becoming the first quota for women in the National Assembly. This was

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31 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2015. Amended Law on Municipalities No. 41. <https://www.iec.jo/sites/default/files/2020-09/2015%20Municipalities%20Law%20EN%202017-07-09%20%281%29.pdf>

32 Independent Elections Commission. 2017. Municipal Elections and Decentralization.

33 Ibid.

done in accordance with Article 6, paragraphs C and D of the Decentralization Law, which stated the need for a 10% quota for women out of the total 85% of seats that are elected, and one third of the 15% allotted for appointment in each council.<sup>34</sup>

It should be noted that a new draft law, entitled the “Municipalities and Decentralization Act of 2021”, is now before the House of Representatives, which proposes to consolidate the quota for women at a minimum of 25% in both the Municipal and Provincial Councils, to increase women’s participation. This draft adopted a mixed system that combines directly elected and indirectly elected candidates and removed from the ‘indirect’ category for the representative of the Women’s Union, although the withdrawn version of the 2020 Local Administration Act listed it along with the other groups represented.

In terms of progress in women’s leadership, women do not hold many leadership positions in the public sector and assume a specific number of roles as secretaries-general of ministries. With reference to the 2021 System of Appointment to Leadership Posts, gender is not one of the evaluation criteria set out in Article 9, paragraph B. In addition, recent amendments to the system, namely Articles 10/C, 11/A and B, have been criticized for promoting favouritism, nepotism and cronyism rather than the principle of merit or competence based on fair and objective grounds, after their abolition of examinations and a switch to full reliance on the reference of the concerned minister.<sup>35</sup> This is despite the explicit provision in the Constitution in Article 22, paragraph 2, stating that: *“Appointments to permanent and temporary public posts in the state and its subordinate departments and municipalities shall be based on competencies and qualifications.”* Also problematic are provisions on early retirement under the Social Security Law, which allows women to be recommended for early retirement without their request, and the amendment of the law in 2019 to raise the early retirement age for females from 45 years to 52 years, it still often prevents women from reaching or staying in leadership positions in the public service.

Regarding women’s representation in government as ministers, it is not consistent nor sustained, as the basis and objective criteria for the selection of most members of governments are often not informed, and seem to reflect geographic, demographic, ethnic and religious quotas, without giving due regard to gender equity. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that in 2015, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women (IMC) was established to pave the way for women into the Council of Ministers, as one of the Standing Committees that has become responsible for women’s presence in the Government.

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34 Ibid.

35 Leadership Posts Appointment System 2021.

With respect to public security, according to Article 4 of the Amended Public Security Law of 2020, the Public Security Directorate (PSD) plays an important role in enhancing Jordan's security and stability. The PSD adopted a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2021–2024 in accordance with the highest professional standards and as a translation of international commitments on women, peace, security and gender equality. It is also in line with the Jordanian National Action Plan (JONAP) for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325, which was developed by the JNCW.

**The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy focuses on three main objectives:**

1. Creating an environment and a culture that promotes gender equality, including structural enhancements, such as childcare services and trained staff, and addressing any infrastructure barriers to women's participation.
2. Integrating gender equality and gender-responsive strategies into employment policies and practices; improving recruitment, promotion and retention systems and departmental performance indicators, to ensure greater participation of women; consideration of codes of conduct and review of the workforce structure to increase women's access to certain roles; identifying targets for women's recruitment; supporting women's participation to increase their access to leadership roles and participation in peacekeeping forces; and establishing guidance, outreach and leadership programmes to support women in their careers.
3. Ensuring commitment and supervision of gender mainstreaming activities, with the activation of internal and external oversight through the adoption of an annual report on women's participation throughout the service life cycle, from appointment to retirement, as well as the appointment of senior male and female officers as gender equality ambassadors and ensuring institutional cooperation with civil society.

It should be noted that the PSD has also adopted an implementation plan for the strategy for 2021–2024, which includes the Public Security Service (police), the Gendarmerie and the Civil Defense Directorate. Accordingly, a self-assessment of gender equality related to national, regional and international laws and standards was carried out. It cited Jordan's ratification of the CEDAW Convention in 1992 and the State's submission of six periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee, the last of which was in 2017, with a single reference to women in security, according to CEDAW Article 8, which focuses on international representation and states: *“women in the Public Security Service continue to participate in peacekeeping missions and in international security functions, and the Public Security Department's Peacekeeping Force Training Institute conducts courses for women police officers prior to their deployment on international peacekeeping missions, focusing on topics related to their functions, including human rights, such as Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions and international humanitarian law,*

*as well as preparatory courses for leadership positions.*<sup>36</sup> At the national level, the gender self-assessment indicated that there were no specific laws regarding gender equality or non-discrimination provisions, but rather responsibilities of the PSD towards the specific policies and strategies of specific public security departments, as well as for monitoring compliance with national and international laws and policies on gender and human rights, through the Oversight and Evaluation Department of the Office of the Inspector General and the PSD's Transparency and Human Rights Office. It also mentioned that the plan includes specific criteria related to personnel recruitment and selection, retention policies, appointments, deployment, promotion and remuneration, as well as guidance and support. Also, the roles of the Gender Office and the Gender Adviser were established and appointed in the PSD in 2020, in addition to the appointment of six senior public security officers as Gender Ambassadors in the regions, and a network of Gender Officers was established within the Directorate.<sup>37</sup>

On 23 August 2021, the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), in collaboration with UN Women, launched the first gender mainstreaming strategy for the armed forces for the 2021–2024 period, with the aim of increasing women's representation in senior leadership positions, encouraging their continued service, and their participation in peacekeeping operations, both domestically and abroad. This four-year strategy is based on a number of gender-responsive policies and guidance that are expected to have a lasting positive impact on the JAF and the promotion of women's participation therein, for their continued development and effectiveness.

The strategy is based on an analysis of studies conducted by the Department of Military Women Affairs in early 2020, which helped to identify current priorities, in line with JONAP 2018–2021. It must be noted that JONAP, launched by the JNCW as part of a national alliance with the military, security and civil society sectors, identified the following priorities: increasing women's participation in peacekeeping operations and in police and military sectors; preventing violent extremism; protecting against gender-based violence; and women's involvement in recovery, relief and reconstruction, such as responding to the refugee crisis.<sup>38</sup>

Looking at the status of women in the judiciary, female judges are distributed across different judicial grades, and it is noted that their percentage is higher in lower grades (from 1 to 3) and lower in higher grades (from 4 to 7). There is only one woman in the Judicial Council, one woman in the Constitutional Court, and one in the Administrative

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36 OHCHR. 1979. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

37 Public Security Directorate (PSD). 2021. Gender Integration Strategy and Executive Plan 2021–2024.

38 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2018. The Jordanian National Action Plan (JONAP) for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2021.

Court. It is worth mentioning that the Sharia Judiciary is completely devoid of women, as there are no Sharia Judges in Jordan, unlike a number of Arab and Islamic countries, noting that the Law on the Formation of Sharia Courts (No. 20 of 2015) and its amendments and the Sharia Judicial Institute Bylaw of 2015 do not include any text that prevents the appointment of women judges or admitting female students or staff to competency-building and training programmes. It is also worth noting that the Ecclesiastical Judiciary appointed the first female judge to the Court of Appeal of the Orthodox Church in 2019. In general, the political work environment remains unattractive to women, especially young women. Resistance to the integration of women into public life is one of the challenges that presents itself, and societal, clan and even political mechanisms are not generally welcoming to this group on the basis that any displacement will be at the expense of traditional forces. Women face many social and cultural challenges that attempt to stereotype their role in specific contexts, distance them from participation or taking the lead in public affairs and entrench the concept of political action as the exclusive domain of men. Political parties themselves appear as entities that have not often declared themselves non-personal gatherings, and despite many of them being licensed, they often fail to keep pace with the times, attract women and young people to join their ranks, or to adopt the principle of the circulation of power.

The difficult economic reality experienced by many women is also highlighted as a direct challenge that often prevents them from engaging in public affairs. The financial constraints associated with the ability to fund electoral campaigns is a challenge for many of women, especially given the current leniency and impunity in the face of the illegal use of political money, which is explicitly outlawed in Articles 24 and 59 of the Electoral Law, for which the penalty is hard labour of three to seven years. Women also often lack the ability to mobilize resources, and the Societies Act (No. 51 of 2008) explicitly forbids associations from achieving any political objectives that fall within the scope of the work and activities of political parties. This prohibits women's institutions and civil society organizations from providing any form of support or assistance to women candidates, including the use of their headquarters. Discrimination and political violence are two other major obstacles that lead to the withdrawal of a number of political leaders from public spaces under the pressure of defamation, slander, humiliation, threats, character assassination, cyberbullying, vilification, allegations of incompetence based on gender and other forms of physical, sexual, verbal and moral violence. This makes the environment of public affairs repellent to the next generation of young women leaders. Moreover, there is no comprehensive criminalization of discrimination or political violence in the national legal system, only vague general provisions contained in the Penal Code (No. 16 of 1960) and its amendments (specifically those contained in Chapter 8 under the heading of felonies and misdemeanors committed against humans), and in the 2017 Family Protection Law in cases of 'family crimes' and the Cybercrime Law (No. 27 of 2015), specifically in its Article 11.

It is worth noting that in 2020 Jordan launched the first procedural guide to protect women from violence in public life as a result of the efforts of the Coalition of Arab Women Parliamentarians to Combat Violence Against Women and the National Democratic Institute. Additionally, a National Advisory Team for the Protection of Women from Political Violence has been formed. Codes of conduct and ethics were also established at the national, but not at the sub-local levels, as both the House of Representatives and the Senate drew up codes of ethics for their members, and the Council of Ministers approved Code of Conduct and Ethics for the Public Service in 2009, while none of the municipal or provincial councils did so.

The media also play an important role in influencing women's political participation. Research indicates that women's representation in all visual, audio and print media does not exceed 9% in total: radio stations top the list at 13%, followed by newspapers and the Jordan News Agency at 10%, while the percentage in television and on websites does not exceed 6%.<sup>39</sup> Studies also indicate that the percentage of hired women media professionals is 16% versus 84% for men, while the percentage of women media experts does not exceed 21% of all media professionals.<sup>40</sup> Women are also not significantly present in leading positions or as the owners of private media outlets, which contributes to the failure to adopt gender-sensitive policies in relation to the contents presented through media. It also does not help to highlight women as leaders and experts and promotes the marginalization of women's voices in national and public issues.

Meanwhile, the geopolitical situation surrounding Jordan casts a shadow over its ability to forge a national identity that is inclusive and extends beyond all sub-identities to consolidate the principle of the rule of law, citizenship and equal opportunities. Moreover, amending Article 6 of the Constitution to add the word "gender" and other amendments have raised demographic concerns related to settlement and naturalization, and religious concerns related to inheritance, polygamy and other religious provisions. As a result, attempts to push for the adoption of a law on equal opportunities are not expected to receive much enthusiasm from decision-makers.

### **Authors' recommendations relating to women's political participation:**

- Emphasize the importance of criminalizing all forms of violence and negative discrimination against women in public life and assist women politicians in addressing cyberbullying and taking the required actions at all national, parliamentary and party levels, as well as by the media and civil society, so as not to impede efforts to increase women's political participation.

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<sup>39</sup> Hebr. 2018. Gender Balance Study in Jordanian Media.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

- Amend the internal regulations of Jordanian political parties to ensure that women are more represented within party cadres and that women can gain access to leadership positions within the parties' various commissions and committees. The party funding system should also be reviewed, especially after the recent elections, to ensure that parties provide adequate support to women candidates, with controls put in place to ensure women have equal access to funding and resources.
- Urge decision-makers to commit to incorporating international conventions on the rights of women or to prevent discrimination against women and additional protocols into national policies and legislation, as well as by explicitly stipulating the place of international conventions and treaties within the national legislative hierarchy.
- Periodically and continuously review the curricula of schools, universities and other educational institutions to enshrine concepts of human rights and women's rights, to ensure that future generations adopt concepts of gender equality in society, in their participation within decision-making processes.
- Provide high-quality political programmes and training opportunities to women and encourage both women and girls to take part.
- Establish tighter specific controls on the use of money in elections and combat all forms of illegal use of electoral financing, which more negatively affect women and young people.
- Ensure that all authorities, ministries and institutions adopt gender-sensitive policies, follow up on implementation and submit gender-responsive reports that are consistent with State trends, and ensure that women have equitable opportunities to take on decision-making positions.
- Set quotas for women in leadership and supervisory positions in the public sector, in particular for women ministers and the secretaries-general of ministries.
- Accompany laws with a financial impact study, as most laws are currently approved without prior assessment or study of the budget required in order to implement or sustain their implementation.
- Minimize reliance on legal regulations while ensuring that key regulations and instructions are issued.
- Provide training to ensure that staff are responsive to the goals and objectives of putting legislation, policies and governmental plans into practice.
- Amend the rules of procedure of the House of Representatives and the Senate to ensure more equitable representation of women in the Permanent Office, Parliamentary Blocs and Committees.
- Urge women politicians to build networks and contacts with media professionals covering political activities in Parliament and Government and organize gender-sensitivity training workshops.

### 3. Violence against women:

Until recently, the Jordanian Constitution did not explicitly prohibit or protect against violence against women, although it could be argued that Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Constitution implied this right. Paragraph 2 states that maintaining social peace is the sacred duty of every Jordanian; while paragraph 3 stipulates that the State shall ensure peace and equality of opportunity for all Jordanians. Social peace and tranquility cannot be achieved under any kind of violence, including violence against women, and its widespread perpetration may constitute a breach of that peace to which every Jordanian is entitled. However, as mentioned, in January 2022, a new amendment to paragraph 6 of Article 6 of the Constitution also explicitly stipulates the State's responsibility for the protection of women from violence: *"The State guarantees the empowerment and support of women to play an active role in building society in a way that guarantees equal opportunities on the basis of justice and equity and protects them from all forms of violence and discrimination."*

No Jordanian legislation contains a definition of violence against women but the Penal Code (No. 16 of 1960) and its amendments criminalize many acts of verbal, physical and sexual violence and neglect. Some of its articles distinguish between whether these crimes affect women or girls. These are in Chapter 7 (Crimes against Morality and Public Morals), especially in two chapters directly related to crimes against women, namely: the first chapter of the seventh section (Articles 292–308) that criminalize rape, indecent assault, kidnapping, seduction, lascivious behaviour, violation of the sanctity of women's private premises and indecent acts. Those articles define the crime of rape as having intercourse with a female (other than one's wife) without her consent, whether by coercion, threat, deception or perfidy, or if the victim cannot resist because of physical or mental weakness or disability. The punishment was increased to the death penalty in some cases if the act of rape was committed against a girl aged 15 years or less, or in cases of sexual intercourse with a girl under 12 years of age.

The Government highlighted its criminalization of marital rape in its sixth periodic report to the CEDAW Committee, in 2015: *"with regard to the crime of marital rape, the Penal Code criminalizes and punishes all abuse, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse of the husband to his wife. The law considers the result of coercive acts, such as beating, wounding and other acts as criminalized as offences of victimization, and the Sharia Courts consider any sexual intercourse by coercion and harm as an injury based on which the wife can demand the termination of the marital relationship and also claim resulting financial compensation from the harm or material damage that has befallen her."*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> CEDAW Committee. 2015. Sixth Periodic Report submitted by Jordan. 22 June. CEDAW/C/JOR/6. Document 15-10445, p. 64/16.

The law also criminalizes sexual intercourse with a girl under 18, and the penalty increases if the offender is an ancestor, whether legal or illegal, one of the child's first-degree relatives, or is entrusted with the upbringing and care of the child, or has religious or legal authority over her, and the offender in this case is denied their guardianship. The penalty also increases if the offender is a cleric, an office manager or a worker who abused their authority or the facilities derived from such authority.

Penalties also increase for offences of indecent assault if committed by two or more persons at a time, if they took turns committing lewd acts on the victim, if the victim develops a sexual illness, was a virgin and her virginity was violated, if the act results in the death of the victim or in his or her being infected with HIV/AIDS (and the perpetrator knows that he or she has the disease beforehand). The law does not permit the use of mitigating grounds in offences of sexual assault if the victim is a person with disabilities.

As for the crime of seduction, indecent assault and violation of the sanctity of women's places, Article 304/1 of the Penal Code defines it as: *"anyone who deceives a virgin over the age of 18 with the promise of marriage and causes her to lose her virginity or to become pregnant shall be punished – if his act does not warrant a more severe penalty – with imprisonment from six months to three years, and if her previous virginity can be guaranteed."* In this crime, the penalties of imprisonment and guaranteeing virginity are combined and the law does not explain how to guarantee virginity or how to implement this punishment. The third paragraph of the same article criminalizes the act of inciting a woman, whether she has a husband or not, to leave her home to join a stranger, to spoil her for her husband, or to break the marital bond – a clause that has been used by husbands in some cases against those who helped a woman who was a victim of domestic violence or who left the marital home due to disagreements. It has also been used against lawyers who have acted on behalf of women in cases related to marital disputes or connected with these disagreements.

Articles 305 and 306 criminalize certain acts of harassment without mentioning them directly, calling them "Crimes of Indecent Foreplay or Indecent Acts in Chapter 2 of Section 7. Incitement to immorality and the breach of ethical and public morals are covered in Articles 309–320, which also criminalize prostitution and pimping (although some of those articles fall within the competence of the Law Against Trafficking in Human Beings), include the definition of a brothel, and criminalize monetary profit by a male and his dependents based on a female's involvement in prostitution.

The Penal Code does not distinguish between women and men when it comes to crimes of injury, even if it is within the family, but in order to further protect victims of domestic violence (the majority of whom are women and children), the Jordanian

Legislature enacted a special law to protect victims of domestic violence in 2008, which it has amended extensively. The Family Protection Law, also known as the Domestic Violence Protection Act of 2017, was then introduced, establishing special protection and prosecution procedures in cases where violence is committed within the family. This is in recognition of the special relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, who often has authority over the victim. Their presence in a private place, which is the family home, where this violence may occur without the presence of witnesses against a person who is supposed to feel safe, also facilitates the crime. This may also make the victim hesitate to report the crime, or to be threatened and lose the support of the rest of the family if she does so.

A specialized Family and Juvenile Protection Department affiliated with the Public Security Directorate was established in Jordan in 1997 to deal with cases of domestic violence, and there are branches of this department in all governorates of the Kingdom. In 2021, the Family Protection Department and Juvenile Police were merged under the new Department of Family and Juvenile Protection. The Domestic Violence Protection Act obliges the Department to respond to every complaint, news item or request for help or protection related to domestic violence as quickly and as efficiently possible. Therefore, the Department must take action by registering the complaint or reporting a crime in detail, organizing the necessary case-by-case transcripts, transporting the injured person to the nearest hospital or health centre (if necessary), transferring the victim with his or her consent to a safe place if need be, and taking the necessary measures to protect those reporting the crime (as well as witnesses), in accordance with a system created to that end.

More than four years have passed since the adoption of the Family Protection Law; however, the system for protecting those who report a crime and witnesses has not yet been enacted, leaving an urgent need to protect victims and witnesses to encourage them to come forward, as victims and those around them are often afraid to report for fear of retaliation. It should be noted that Article 4, Paragraph B, of the Domestic Violence Protection Act provides that *“the identity of the authors in cases of domestic violence shall not be disclosed unless otherwise required by judicial proceedings.”*

The Act mandated the Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD) to establish procedures for the settlement of disputes between concerned parties with their consent and in minor offences only. The settlement file must then be referred to the competent court for approval and the decision to ratify the settlement must include measures such as compelling the perpetrator of domestic violence to perform a community service, and enrolling the parties to the dispute in psychological or social rehabilitation programmes or sessions. The FJPD is responsible for following up on the implementation of measure

imposed on perpetrators of domestic violence and the Department must establish a special paper and electronic registry to document cases of domestic violence and the corresponding actions taken.

The Law obliges the FJPD to implement most of its provisions, beginning from the registration of a complaint to the referral to a hospital or a safe place, to the protection of those who report a crime and other witnesses, to reaching a settlement, ensuring its implementation and its documentation. Conducting all of these tasks effectively and efficiently requires adequate human and financial resources and infrastructure, such as buildings and accompanying services for victims.

In relation to the reporting of domestic violence, the Law has committed education, health and social service-providers in the public and private sectors to report any case of domestic violence that befalls on incapacitated or incompetent persons with incomplete legal capacity the second they become aware or informed of it. The reporting of such a crime can also be done with the consent of the affected person, if they were enjoying their full legal capacity and the violence was a misdemeanor in accordance with the law. It is feared that the reporting obligation may prevent victims from being assisted as it transfers them through their families to health, education and social services. The Family Protection Law provides multiple forms of protection for victims, ranging from hospitalization to referral to a safe place, as well as the possibility for the competent court to issue a protection order for the injured person or any family member to prevent retaliations. The protection order is provided for in both the current Law and in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of 2008. Nevertheless, the possible protection orders are very limited, with their importance placed on protecting victims, especially when they are more than one person (such as the mother and children) and they prefer to stay in the family home to enjoy a life with some sense of normalcy, especially for working women and students (of schools and universities).

However, maintaining family unity and ensuring that victims, such as mothers and children, remain in one shelter has been a challenge up until now, and it may lead to victims' reluctance to report abuse, especially given women victims' fears of being transferred to preventive detention in reform and rehabilitation centres. This sometimes happens under the pretext of protecting them, based on the Crime Prevention Act of 1954, which does not cover the victims of domestic violence or those in need of protection.

The use of this preventive detention procedure has decreased in the last three years since the Government approved the Shelter Bylaw (No. 171 of 2016)<sup>42</sup> and the opening in 2018 of the Amnah Safe House, which was the first to host and rehabilitate women at

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42 Published in the Official Gazette under Article 4 of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Act (No. 14 of 1956).

risk, instead of sending them to reform and rehabilitation centres for indefinite periods for their protection. Beneficiaries are received only with their stated own volition. Run by the Ministry of Social Development, a number of women began getting transferred from the Reform and Rehabilitation Centres for Women to the Amnah House, based on referrals from administrative governors, and its provision of rehabilitation and reintegration services. The shelter receives girls at risk, accommodates them, provides food, clothing, support services, training, rehabilitation and physical and psychological recovery programmes, health and counselling, awareness, legal assistance to resolve their problems in accordance with human rights principles, appropriate employment opportunities, and psychological well-being programmes.

It was hoped that the establishment of this Safe House would lead to the abolition of the preventive detention of women at risk, or at least not subject them solely to the convictions of the administrative governor. It is worth noting that victims' fear of being exposed to administrative detention may prevent their reporting of violence, which may threaten her life, make her feel hopeless and even contemplate committing suicide or just running away and abandoning the family home. The latter would result in an all-points bulletin against her, which would leave her vulnerable to arrest from any police patrol, and prevent her from leading a normal life, or even leave her vulnerable to exploitation.

In a 2006 report on Jordan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture described preventive detention as discriminatory ill-treatment.<sup>43</sup> It was subsequently described in reports from the Committee against Torture and human rights experts as discrimination-based torture, especially since this procedure may involve punishing the victim and pressuring her to accept a certain status that she would not accept otherwise.<sup>44</sup> Administrative governors, in their issued decisions on preventive detention of women, justify them under the pretext of protecting victims based on the Crime Prevention Law (No. 7 of 1954), even though there is no explicit provision of their power to arrest persons in need of protection. Administrative rulers also request a male sponsor to rescind the administrative arrest decision, which leaves the woman vulnerable again to exploitation, as how she can provide a sponsor while she is in the rehabilitation centre, if those whom she expects to protect and support her are those who threaten her. This may in some cases even lead her to marry the relatives of patients of the rehabilitation centre out of desperation, potentially causing her to enter into another vicious cycle of violence and exploitation. Rights organizations regularly visit the Reform and Rehabilitation Centre to meet with women in preventive detention to help find fair solutions.

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43 UN Human Rights Council. 2007. Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Manfred Nowak: addendum 2007. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/591444?ln=en>.

44 Committee against Torture. 2011. Report of the Committee against Torture. A/66/44. <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/A.66.44.pdf>; Equal Rights Trust, Mizan for Law. 2017. 'Shouting Through the Walls: DISCRIMINATORY TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT CASE STUDIES FROM JORDAN'. London.

In some cases, protection and service-providers are afraid and reluctant to respect a woman's desire to separate from her family and choose an independent place of residence – a right guaranteed to her by the Constitution and the Law – or to marry someone the family does not accept. They may also refuse shelters – as access to which requires the consent of the victim, or being subjected to murder, and then blame her for not leaving, which may then allow administrative governors to justify resorting to preventive detention. This issue can be addressed by working in partnership with all relevant parties from governmental agencies and civil society to develop appropriate plans and solutions for each case, using the methodology of the case study adopted by the National Framework for the Protection of the Family from Violence. It should be noted that the manual on the work procedures for administrative governors has been issued and related training has been provided. Also, the National Council for Family Affairs also issued a Case Management Methodology Document for Dealing with Cases of Domestic Violence in 2021, along with related training.

Civil society organizations that provide direct services through field work with victims are limited and face challenges related to the legal environment governing their work or a lack of necessary funding, which is required by law for approval by the Council of Ministers, in accordance with a mechanism that may take several months and may end in rejection. In addition, they face challenges in the availability of qualified and willing human resources to carry out such work. Penalties for crimes within the family, the majority of which are committed against women, are often reduced because family members forfeit the personal right to legally punish the aggressor.<sup>45</sup> Such a waiver causes injustice to the victim and promotes the occurrence of such crimes. Human rights organizations therefore emphasize the need to explicitly stipulate that penalties cannot be reduced if crimes are committed within the family.

The National Framework for the Protection of the Family has been adopted as one of the pillars of the strategic plan of the Public Security Directorate for the 2020–2023 period, which details the following:

- Establish the matrix of priorities prepared by the Ministerial Committee for the empowerment of women as the basis for the annual plan of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department.
- Develop reporting mechanisms to suit the challenges of the current stage. As such, an emergency hotline (911) was introduced, along with a smartphone application, WhatsApp contact number (097911911), Instagram messages, management email and social media platforms in the form of the Messenger application on the Department's Facebook page.
- Restructure the Department and the creation of a division for the settlement of

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45 Article 97 of the Penal Code.

measures to respond to legal texts on the implementation of protection orders and measures. This will be done in with the gap analysis reports prepared by the National Council for the Family and partners from civil society and international organizations.

- Establish the position of a Gender Officer associated with the Director of the Department to provide specialized consultation. In March of 2021, the decision was made to merge the Juvenile Police with the Family Protection Department, to improve services and to accelerate the deployment of services for dealing with children involved in disputes or in trouble with the law. This integration was done for strategic and administrative, as well as logistical reasons, to optimize the investment of all available resources to improve the services provided.
- Conduct an analytical study of gender-based violence under the outputs of the action plan for the Public Security Directorate's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, in cooperation with UN Women.
- Develop a handbook on gender-sensitive police services for women and girls at risk of violence in cooperation with UN Women.
- Develop Gender-Based Violence Indicator cards in collaboration with UN Women.
- Develop a gender data platform on gender-based violence.
- Develop training curricula related to gender-based violence and prepare the Department's training team to deliver classes on gender-related issues.
- Underline the recent directive by the Director of Public Security to initiate the restructuring of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, and review and expand its competencies to include all aspects related to the protection of women and children. Work to review all related regulations and instructions, modify them to achieve the desired end, and establish new foundations and procedures to ensure greater protection from violence and abuse. The Family and Juvenile Protection Department has also expanded, opening departments in the governorates of Tafila, Ma'an, West Irbid and Southern Amman.
- Establish judicial bodies to adjudicate cases of domestic violence, in response to the provisions of the Domestic Violence Protection Act, for which 77 judges have been appointed and special training courses have been provided.
- Develop a system for the protection of those who report crimes and witnesses in cases of domestic violence.

As stated in the fourth periodic report of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the implementation of the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment submitted to the United Nations in 2018: *"[t]he institutionalization of procedures to respond to cases of domestic violence contained in the National Framework for Family Protection from Violence and the provision of services needed was done by finding a system to automate the procedures for dealing with cases of domestic violence under the umbrella of the National Council for Family Affairs; also,*

*the Family Violence Protection Act no. (15/2017) was enacted, which included a package of measures that relate to quickly responding to cases of violence and providing counselling services, shelter, reconciliation services and the allocation of judges to the issues of domestic violence.”<sup>46</sup>*

Actions taken by the National Council for Family Affairs to address violence against women in 2017, under the supervision of the National Team for Protection against Domestic Violence, and in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), included the preparation of manuals. These include:

unified national procedures for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, domestic violence and violence against children; a procedures manual in Arabic and English for all employees in all institutions, to serve as a reference for the mechanisms for dealing with cases of domestic violence; and holding training courses for trainers working in governmental and non-governmental institutions concerned with family protection. The latter were delivered by a national training team to be a nucleus for training within their institutions on these procedures; in partnership with national institutions, and the Ministry of Higher Education has adopted the training diploma proposed by the Family and Juvenile Protection Department associated with the protection of women and children at a rate of 130 training hours.

Through the annual 16 Days international campaign against gender-based violence, a specific issue is selected each year and the JNCW supports all activities and undertakings of the campaign throughout the year, whether to change negative societal perceptions and/or to amend legislation or procedures to eliminate violence against women.

In recent years, activities have been expanded, and people all ages and both sexes have been targeted, with some focused specifically on working with men and boys. The “Stop the Murders of Women” campaign in 2016 contributed to the amendment of the Penal Code of 2017. The 2018 “Do not Stay Silent; Harassment is a Crime” theme, was based on raising the awareness of society in general, and students in schools and universities in particular, on the phenomenon of sexual harassment. It emphasized the importance of reducing it, reporting cases, not socially accepting it, ending the culture of tolerance for perpetrators, strengthening the role of men, young men and girls in confronting gender-based violence and harassment in particular, and working with stakeholders to facilitate procedures and mechanisms for reporting and judicial follow-up on cases. To this end, the campaign

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<sup>46</sup> Committee against Torture. 2018. List of issues prior to the submission of the fourth period report of Jordan. 13 June. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fJOR%2fQPR%2f4&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fJOR%2fQPR%2f4&Lang=en).

used a set of awareness-raising and advocacy materials directed at all societal groups. Through social media and websites, awareness videos were broadcast to introduce the concept of harassment and its criminalization. Advertising and media materials, including radio public service announcements (PSAs), educational series and live testimonies were also produced to effectively encourage the targeted groups to address the phenomenon of harassment and its effects, with useful tips on how to defend oneself in the event of harassment. The campaign reached more than 13 million users.

The results of a pre- and post-test and remote assessment showed that the percentage of women who can identify the concept of harassment increased from 73% to 96.9%, and the percentage of women who know who they can turn to when they are harassed rose from 70.1% to 94.9%, while the percentage of knowledge of legal methods and procedures to reduce harassment rose significantly, from 28.3% to 89.7%.

The JNCW started the process of estimating the economic cost of violence against women in cooperation with governmental, non-governmental bodies, national and international stakeholders and supporting them. This will lead to a better understanding of the costs associated with prevention, protection, prosecution and redress of violence against women, which in turn will allow the State to improve its response to the phenomenon.

With respect to offences committed under the pretext of revenge for honour, the text of Article 340 of the Penal Code was amended by Act No. 8 of 2011, so that the mitigating excuse that had exempted a man from punishment in the event that he caught one of his first-degree relatives in the act of adultery and granted him this mitigating factor, was replaced with an amended article providing that the wife can also benefit from this mitigating excuse if she surprises her husband while committing the crime of adultery or in an illegal bed in the marital home.

### **The position and observations of international human rights treaty bodies with regard to violence against women:**

According to the Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report submitted by Jordan to the UN Human Rights Committee in 2017: *“While welcoming the enactment of the Law on protection against domestic violence and the repeal of article 308 of the Penal Code, which had allowed rapists to avoid accountability by marrying their victim, the Committee remains concerned about article 292 of the Penal Code, which provides an exception for, and thus does not criminalize, nonconsensual marital sex. The Committee is also concerned with article 98 of the Penal Code, which provides for reduced sentencing for murder if the victim’s family consents. It is further concerned with the policy of preventive measures, such as protective custody, purportedly used to protect women from violence or honour crimes.*

*The Committee notes that significant gaps remain in addressing domestic violence in practice (arts. 2–3, 6–7 and 26).<sup>11</sup> The State party should: CCPR/C/JOR/CO/5 3 (a) Strengthen the legal framework for the protection of women against domestic violence by, inter alia, amending article 292 of the Penal Code to criminalize marital rape and removing the grounds for mitigating circumstances for honour crimes; (b) Revise its policy of protective custody and take all appropriate measures to ensure that women fleeing domestic violence have access to shelter and support without jeopardizing their liberty; (c) Develop and implement more effective training programmes for law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors and lawyers, as well as for employees of the Administrative Governor’s department related to family protection, and provide assistance to victims of domestic violence; (d) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, undertake research on the root causes of violence against women and use such research as a basis for enhanced awareness-raising efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women.”<sup>47</sup>*

In its Concluding Observations on Jordan’s sixth periodic report in 2017, the CEDAW Committee recommended the enactment of legislation to define and criminalize all forms of gender-based violence against women, to address the issue of violence prevention, protection of victims, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, to ensure that allegations of gender-based violence against women, (including for domestic violence) are investigated, that perpetrators are duly prosecuted and punished, and that victims receive adequate remedy, including reparations. The Committee also recommended that all remaining discriminatory provisions of the Penal Code be repealed without any delay, in particular Articles 97–99 and 340, and ensure that rapists and perpetrators of so-called “honour” crimes are prosecuted and adequately punished, and that they are not able to benefit from any reduced sentences or mitigated charges.<sup>48</sup> It is noteworthy that Jordan also repealed Article 308 (on “honour killing”) in the 2017 amendments to the Penal Code.

According to Jordan’s follow-up to the concluding observations on its fifth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee in 2020: *“the 2016 Bylaw of Shelters for Persons at Risk provided that the aim of the shelter was to ensure protection and temporary accommodation for the beneficiary until their problem was resolved or the risk was eliminated, to provide social care, living, psychological, health, counselling, cultural and legal services, and to build an information base for the beneficiaries.”<sup>49</sup>*

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47 Human Rights Committee. 2017. Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Jordan. 4 December. CCPR/C/JOR/CO/5. document GE.17-21522/A, p. 3. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fJOR%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fJOR%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en)

48 CEDAW Committee. 2017. Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report submitted by Jordan. 9 March. CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, Document 17-03877, pp. 11–13.

49 UN Human Rights Committee. 2020. Information submitted by Jordan in follow-up to Concluding Observations on its Fifth Periodic Report. 23 December. CCPR/C/JOR/fco/5, document GE.21-01873/A.

## **Authors' recommendations related to violence against women:**

- Carry out a comprehensive review of the Penal Code to keep pace with the social and structural changes that have taken place in Jordanian society. One of the proposed amendments should include repealing Article 340, and amending Articles 98 and 99, including by adding a provision that mitigating grounds may not be applied if the act of violence is committed on a minor or if the perpetrator and the victim are from the same family.
- Apply the Domestic Violence Protection Act, including to: issue protection orders and remove perpetrators from the family home; develop programmes to deal with aggressors; establish a system for the protection of witnesses and victims; and allocate adequate resources for its application. Strengthen material and technical support and human resources for the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, which implements the majority of the provisions of the Domestic Violence Protection Act, in addition to the responsibilities set out in the Juvenile Law.
- Establish shelters that are open and compatible with the needs of non-vulnerable victims and their children, allowing them to study and work, which may encourage victims to report violence.
- Affirm that preventive detention is not used or threatened to be used, as it prevents victims from reporting violence and may expose them to violations of their rights.
- Support civil society organizations to ensure that they can provide their services flexibly and increase reliance on them on the front lines of the response, to benefit from their experience and build trust and partnerships. Facilitate the work of non-governmental organizations that provide support services to survivors of domestic violence and ensure that they receive the necessary funding to continue their work.
- Ensure that training for employees and service-providers focuses on changing attitudes and beliefs, not just enhancing skills, so that the selection of qualified workers is based on an exam similar to what happens in the top jobs. This exam should focus on measuring attitudes.
- Appoint women to leadership positions in governmental agencies that provide services to survivors of domestic violence, such as to the Directorate of Juvenile and Societal Security in the Ministry of Social Development – which has never been presided over by a woman and is the technical directorate that oversees all shelters for women and girls – or as the Secretary-General of the Ministry or the Assistant Secretary-General for Welfare Affairs.
- Evaluate the protection system in Jordan, especially as more than 20 years have passed since the establishment of the Family Protection Department (in 1997), with the Juvenile Police added in 2021. This evaluation ought to include the attitudes and beliefs of workers, both female and male, who work with survivors.

#### 4. Economic participation:

Women's low economic participation rates are one of the most significant challenges that stands in the way of achieving gender equality in Jordan. Article 6, paragraph 2, of the Jordanian Constitution indicates that the State guarantees the right to work and equal opportunities. Article 23 indicates that work is the right of all citizens and that the State should provide it to Jordanians by directing and advancing the national economy, while paragraph D of the same article notes that the State sets the conditions for the work of women and juveniles. Looking at Jordan's *Vision 2025* (launched in 2015), the National Strategy for the Development of Human Resources 2016–2025, the National Employment Strategy (2011–2020) and the Jordanian Economic Growth Stimulus Plan (2018–2022), they all draw on the general integrated framework governing economic and social policies, which is based on providing opportunities for all. They focus on stimulating the national economy, the importance of partnering with the private sector, enhancing investment opportunities, and establishing several support funds to increase economic and social productivity (such as the King Abdullah II Fund for Development). They also focus on training and building skills, competencies and qualifications to reduce unemployment, targeting thousands of young people in preparation for their entry into the labour market, and on increasing the rate of women's participation in the labour force to 24%. For this, it is essential to create the legislative and regulatory environment, as there are many additional challenges that exacerbate female unemployment and reduce their rates of economic participation. But there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals set out in Jordan's *Vision 2025*. Ironically, high levels of education constitute one of the challenges, given the inability of the Jordanian economy to create sufficient jobs relative to the number of new entrants to the labour market, and the fact that women's high level of education does not reflect positively on their entry into the labour market, as the societal and stereotypical view of women's roles affects their choices of academic disciplines.

It should be noted that the public sector is the most attractive for working women, specifically in limited sectors – namely the sectors of health, education, administrative and service professions – for reasons related to the work environment, job security and stability, as well as family and societal acceptance. In fact, female access to public sector jobs is the primary goal of female education, especially in the Jordanian governorates, where private sector activity is lower than in the capital and major cities, in the absence of regular and safe public transportation.

Although the International Labour Organization (ILO) recently indicated that women occupy 62% of administrative positions in Jordan, it is important to keep in mind that this is based on the Labour Force Survey, where the majority of respondents are from the highly female-based education sector, and most schools and kindergartens in Jordan

are run by women. If these sectors are excluded from the sample, women would occupy only 2.7% of administrative positions in other sectors.<sup>50</sup> Legislation also affects women's tendency to seek public sector jobs, as public sector employees are covered by the Civil Service System, whereas private sector employees are covered by the Labour Law, and provisions vary between both sectors, such as maternity leave of up to 90 days in the public sector and 70 days in the private sector. Article 105 of the Civil Service Bylaw states that: “[a w]orking woman has a right to maternity leave of 90 consecutive days before and after childbirth with full salary and the bonuses that she deserves, based on a medical report from a doctor or legal midwife, and the maternity leave does not affect the right of the female employee to her annual leave”. Meanwhile, Article 70 of the Labour Code stipulates that: “working women are entitled to full paid maternity leave before and after childbirth, a total of 10 weeks, provided that the duration of such leave after childbirth is not less than 6 weeks, and it is prohibited to let her resume work before the expiration of that period.” Article 27, paragraph A, states that the employer does not have the right to terminate the employment of the worker or give notice to terminate the employment of the worker in a number of cases, one of which is a pregnant working woman starting from the sixth month of gestation of her pregnancy or during her maternity leave. Although this text constitutes a protection for pregnant working women, it should be extended to include the entire period of pregnancy and maternity leave. Also in need of amendment is Article 46, which would benefit from a new clause that allows the Minister to determine the way of payment of wages through employers in sectors where wage violations are committed, which may contribute to reducing violations and help protect workers.

It should be noted that there are a number of important amendments promulgated in the amended Labour Law (No. 14 of 2019) that are in the interest of women and directly affect their economic participation rates, such as the introduction of the concept of flexible and part-time work, the concept of gender pay discrimination for work of equal value (in Article 2), the criminalization of wage discrimination and the stiffer punishment if such discrimination is confirmed (in Article 53). Other amendments include compelling employers to create a suitable place for the children of workers, and not to link it to the number of workers or to their gender, as was the case with the old law, which only required daycares when female workers had at least 15 children under 5 years of age. After being amended, Article 72, paragraph (B) notes that: “[t]he Minister may determine the appropriate alternatives if it appears that the employer is unable to create the appropriate place in the facility or its surroundings within instructions issued for this purpose”. Married Jordanians constitute the highest percentage of working women, of job-seekers and the highest percentage of economically inactive Jordanians. Especially in light of the labour market showing severe weakness in creating jobs for married women, research suggests

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50 International Labour Organization (ILO). 2021. “Women managers in Jordan: ILO cautions against taking data out of context.” 7 March. [https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_774850/lang--ar/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_774850/lang--ar/index.htm)

that most Jordanian women drop out of the labour market at the age of 30, which is a key stage for reproduction and childcare.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Article 12 of the Law was amended to exempt the children of Jordanian women who are married to non-Jordanians residing in the Kingdom from having to obtain work permits.

It should be noted that the 2021 draft law to amend the Labour Law, which is currently before the Jordanian Parliament, proposes a complete repeal of Article 69, which allows the Minister of Labour to specify the times and sectors in which women may not be employed. It also proposes an amendment to Article 29 of the law, to add protection against sexual harassment and assault and a specific definition of sexual harassment, as: *“the practice of any physical or verbal behaviour of a sexual nature, or threats associated with it, that harms the dignity of the worker, is humiliating to them and leads to their physical, psychological or sexual harm.”* To date, the law has not been submitted to the plenary session for a vote, but the importance of all of the aforementioned amendments in general lies in creating a safe and friendly working environment for women and the family, which will help them participate in the labour market.

Article 3 of the Labour Law (No. 8 of 1996) specify that it shall not be applied to domestic and agricultural workers, which would be covered by special bylaws, such as the Bylaw for Domestic Workers, Cooks and Gardeners.

Amendments to this Bylaw in 2020 sought to strengthen protection of these workers from exploitation or the violation of their rights by ensuring confidentiality in dealing with complaints and giving these workers the right to leave work and claim compensation for damages in the event of any physical or sexual violence. The Bylaw also punishes the illegal reuse of labour permits (either after their expiration and is not renewed or for work of a different type than specified under the permit), as this sector has high employment rates among female workers, especially expatriates, migrant and refugee women, who are classified as the most vulnerable and open to risks and exploitation.

The Bylaw for Agricultural Workers was only approved in 2021 after a 13-year wait for the law. According to Article 17 of this Bylaw, agricultural workers are now covered by the provisions of the Labour and Social Security Law, with the exception of employers who employ three workers or less, and Article 15 of the same Bylaw includes provisions for set working hours, holidays and insurance coverage. This Bylaw’s promulgation constitutes a legislative guarantee of the rights and human dignity of workers in the agricultural sector and aims to prevent the continued violation of their rights, especially given the significant disparity in power between the two sides of these work relationships. Data released by the Department of Statistics in 2019 show a modest percentage of women’s

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51 <https://www.sigi-jordan.org/>

employment in agriculture, livestock and rural areas, and that households headed by women own a smaller percentage of agricultural land and livestock than men.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the above, successive amendments to the Social Security Law (up to Law No. 24 of 2019) have aimed to enhance women's economic participation. Meanwhile, there has been an expansion of the services covered by maternity insurance through amendments to Article 42 to allocate 25% of the Maternity Insurance Fund to the establishment of social protection programmes linked to support the employment of women and their stability in the labour market. The amendment of the law was followed by the issuance of a bylaw in late 2020 that allowed the Fund to provide cash subsidies to working mothers and renew daycare centres in some areas to serve more than 28,000 families.<sup>53</sup> Another amendment repealed Article 45, paragraph B, obliging establishments to pay contributions for old age, disability, death and work stoppage during maternity leave, which was intended to reduce the burden on employers who employ women and reduce the redundancy of these services for working mothers, while another view is that this undermined women's rights to insurance during maternity leave.

The successive amendments to the Social Security Law (up to Law No. 24 of 2019) have also allowed women to pass on their pensions to their husband and children through inheritance, in addition to allowing a widow of insured military personnel to combine her full share of her husband's salary and her pension or wage from work. In addition, the law raised the early retirement age for females to 52 years and increased the number of monthly contributions for the insured to 228. This created controversy between supporters who found that this created opportunities for women to reach leadership positions at work and opponents who found that it adds an additional burden to insured women, especially with respect to early retirement salaries that remain relatively low, and their inability to meet the basic needs of beneficiaries. Requests have also been made to amend Article 81, paragraph 2, which provides that: *"the share of the [w]idower or widow of both the insured or the holder of the pension/salary or the owner of the morbidity salary and their daughters and sisters who are single, widowed or divorced at the time of death, stops when they are married and return to her in the event of divorce or widowhood."* The text has been criticized for depicting the woman as a dependent being and not as a rights-holder, and they are deprived of their share of benefits with a direct impact on their social status, but this does not apply to men.

The amendments to the Civil Retirement Act (No. 34 of 2018), including Article 31 change the practice of giving the mother the right to the salary of an employee or retiree who is deceased without the condition of being widowed or divorced, as was the old text. This

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52 Ibid.

53 Reports of the General Establishment for Social Security for 2019.

was amended in Article 33 by deleting the words “and when they were married again the salary is permanently discontinued”. This allowed wives, daughters and mothers to benefit from the beneficiaries’ pensions even after a second marriage. The amendment of Article 38 to allow any spouse to combine his or her pension with his or her share of the retirement of his or her deceased spouse. The law amending the Income Tax Law (No. 38 of 2018) for the first time provided recognition of the female breadwinner. According to Article 7, paragraph E: *“the female provider has the right to receive an exemption for dependents provided for in paragraph A of this article, and in the case of applying for this exemption from more than one provider, it shall be shared in accordance with the dependency ratio provided that invoices or supporting documents are presented; otherwise, it shall be shared equally between the providers”*. The importance of ensuring a safe and dignified working environment is highlighted in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, whose most important target (8.5) is to: *“achieve a full and productive employment, decent work for all women and men, including youth and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.”*

In general, the fundamental role played by laws, regulations, policies and initiatives in creating the right conditions to increase women’s economic participation cannot be ignored. But the most prominent challenge remains in following up on the implementation of these laws and regulations and putting them into practice, as well as providing the necessary budgets and financial resources to enforce them. In addition, it is essential to develop the capacities of human resources and labour inspection teams who go into factories and laboratories, and to strengthen oversight of units in the Ministry of Labour and the Social Security Institution, so that they can carry out the tasks entrusted to them. Cooperation with the ILO within the Better Work Jordan programme is also key to carry out a comprehensive labour inspection reform based on the principle of Strategic Compliance and Electronic Inspection, with priority given to issues related to gender and child labour, as well as a focus on raising awareness about ILO Convention 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace.

In this context, it is necessary to refer to the Law on the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings of 2021, which included among its most prominent amendments the counting of vagrancy, regulated in Article 3, as a crime of trafficking in human beings, as well as the intensification of penalties in Article 8. Article 12 was amended to establish the duty of competent authorities to protect survivors and their psychological, physical and moral well-being, as well as to create appropriate conditions for their assistance and care, their psychological, educational and social health, and to provide them with just compensation for material and moral damage. Meanwhile, Article 13 was amended to protect witnesses who have not reached 18 years of age to enable them

to use modern technology. Amendments also include the establishment of a special fund to assist victims of human trafficking. However, despite all of these positive amendments, some parties are still demanding that the law be brought in line with the United Nations Convention against Transboundary Crime of 2000, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants, by Land, Sea and Air, as Jordan's current law focuses on combating crime rather than preventing it and it abolishes the bail system. It also expands on the concept of trans-state human trafficking contained in Article 9 of the law. According to the report of the Tamkeen Association for Legal Aid and Human Rights, the Jordanian judiciary has adjudicated 263 human trafficking cases over the past 10 years, of which most were related to forced labour (65%), followed by cases of sexual exploitation (21%) and cases of organ removal (14%), notably with females comprising 75% of all victims and only 25% being male.<sup>54</sup>

It is not possible to talk about the economic empowerment of women without addressing women in trade unions, as the year 2021 saw the election of the first woman to a labour union secretary-general position among the 17 existing workers unions, as Bushra Al-Salman was elected Secretary-General of the General Union of Workers in the food industry. Whereas for professional unions, no woman has ever been elected to the position of secretary general in any of these unions.

The total percentage of women's representation in the membership of administrative bodies is 13.1%. As for the percentage of women's affiliation with the general body in workers unions, it was 17% in 2018. Although women make up 34% of the membership of trade unions, according to 2017 statistics, their representation in trade union councils is very modest<sup>55</sup> and it is reported that all trade and professional unions do not require a specific quota or percentage of women within the internal laws and regulations governing their work. Also, a number of unions, especially workers union, lack a women's committee.

The same applies to bank board members. According to the Association of Banks in Jordan, the percentage of women working in the banking sector on average is 35%, while in some banks it reaches 55%, yet this is not reflected in the boards of these banks, where the percentage of women does not exceed 9%.<sup>56</sup> Gender equality has become part of the governance of all sectors, as an International Monetary Fund study conducted in 2017

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54 Tamkeen Legal Aid and Human Rights Association. 2021. Report on Human Trafficking Cases.

55 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2020. Comprehensive national review of progress towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years (Beijing+25).

56 Association of Banks in Jordan. 2018. Study on the role of banks and finance institutions in women's economic empowerment. [https://www-atf-org-jo.translate.google/?q=ar/node/20211&\\_x\\_tr\\_sch=http&\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ar&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://www-atf-org-jo.translate.google/?q=ar/node/20211&_x_tr_sch=http&_x_tr_sl=ar&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc)

proved that the presence of women on the boards of directors of banks was associated with greater stability, represented by results on the Z-SCORE index, and a decrease in the percentage of non-performing loans.<sup>57</sup> But the applicable banking law does not oblige the banking sector to assign a specific percentage of women to boards of directors. However, instructions soon to be issued by the Central Bank will provide for the appointment of at least 20% women to the boards of directors of banks, as well as to the boards of directors of companies and public and private joint stock companies. The Companies Law (No. 22 of 1997) and its amendments do not provide for any quota or percentage reserved for women, but the Jordan Securities Commission announced the draft Governance Instructions for Public and Private Joint Stock Companies for 2021, whose Article 6, paragraph B, provides that: “[t]he composition of the board of directors shall take into account the age and gender diversity according to the nature of the company’s work and its requirements”. The Jordanian Business and Professional Women’s Forum has demanded that the text specify at least 30%, rather than being generally worded.

Looking at the Boards of Directors of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Farmers’ Union, we find that all laws governing their work do not require a specific quota for women, although women are underrepresented. According to studies, the presence of women in leading economic positions reflects positively on the performance of the economy and institutions and is in the public interest. Jordan is one of the countries that has successfully embraced the entrepreneurial business movement and created the right environment for the success of the entrepreneurial sector and start-ups, especially in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, where 51% of graduates of related disciplines in 2018 were female and 22% of entrepreneurial companies include women on their boards of directors.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, only 3.8% of women are entrepreneurs or self-employed, and only 9% own small or micro enterprises for reasons related to difficulty in obtaining finance and providing guarantees, as well as fear of failure and family obligations.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the emergence of fines in recent years has fuelled women’s fear of debtor imprisonment for civil debts (which is provided for in the Implementation Act of 2007), although it should be noted that the State is currently reviewing this law to overcome this issue and mitigate its negative effects on women’s economic participation.

The lack of measurement of women’s participation in the informal economy or in unregulated work is one of the reasons for the low rate of women’s economic participation. It must be pointed out that many Jordanian women and Syrian refugees work in

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57 Jordan Strategies Forum Report. <http://www.jsf.org/ar/>.

58 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship 2018. Study on the Harmonization of Supply and Demand for the Disciplines of ICT Graduates.

59 Tahaddi AL-A’alfiyiah (Millennium Challenge) Foundation. 2015. Plans for Social Inclusion and Gender.

unregulated sectors, such as shop work, manual work, private teaching, secretarial work, and own-account businesses without regular employees, with digital infrastructure providing an opportunity for them to market their products and conduct the business of buying and selling from home. It also provides instructions for licensing businesses from home within the municipality's boundaries for the year 2017. The same instructions were issued by the Amman Municipality in 2017, according to the Professions Licenses Law (No. 28 of 1999) and its amendments. Also, in 2018, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Municipalities issued the "Your Guide to Start Your Work from Home" guide, as an opportunity to encourage women to work from home, especially as covered professions have expanded to more than 71 professions – which include intellectual and consulting professions – as well as exemptions and reduced fees for this type of work. More than 80% of the home-based businesses that were registered in 2017 were owned by women.

Jordanian women are also very active in paid care work in the informal sector. This activity has increased during the pandemic, as women have been compelled to play additional care roles as a result of the general ban and the closure of schools, nurseries and many institutions. The danger lies in the fact that care work is not recognized nor is it protected by the State, even though it is closely linked to the continuation of the economy and the search for work. Yet labour laws, social development and/or social security do not provide for any form of recognition or protection for care work, which is something that requires concerted efforts to codify and protect.

### **Authors' recommendations relating to economic participation:**

- Follow up and issue the relevant regulations and instructions for the application of laws.
- Amend the civil service system to give equal treatment to female and male employees in granting family allowances and in the provision of care for the children of employees.
- Amend the laws for professional and workers unions, chambers of industry and commerce, and the laws of companies and banks to provide minimum quotas for women to ensure their fair representation.
- Develop plans to stimulate economic growth that are gender-sensitive, because raising women's economic participation is in the interest of the entire national economy.
- Link educational inputs to the labour market, especially in university education, and expand vocational education and training for girls.
- Adopt and legislate measures to encourage the private sector to employ women and girls, such as providing tax exemptions commensurate with certain employment rates for women.

- Strengthen the capacities of inspection personnel of the Ministry of Labour and other relevant bodies to ensure compliance with the law on minimum wage and a safe working environment and the commitment to establish nurseries in public and private sectors, as well as to ensure the absence of forced employment and the tightening of penalties in cases of violation.
- Remove all legal restrictions on businesses and the times at which women are allowed to work.
- Focus on the role of investment and the opening of productive clusters in creating additional employment opportunities for women, especially in governorates and remote areas.
- Ban gender-based job advertising in order to provide greater opportunities for women.
- Review national legislation periodically to provide a safe and gender-sensitive working environment and to remove remaining articles that discriminate against women, deprive them of their right to inherit or restrict their right to enter or continue in the labour market, in order to bring them into conformity with relevant international conventions and protocols.

## 5. Women and health:

The Kingdom's ranking on the Health and Survival Index declined to 145 in 2021, compared to a score of 103 in 2020. The index measures two things, namely: the sex ratio at birth (male/female) and the average life expectancy at birth.<sup>60</sup> According to the Higher Population Council in Jordan, Jordan has achieved full parity in relation to the sex ratio due to the restrictions imposed on abortion, but the decrease in terms of the average healthy life of females may be due to the fact that the new estimates in the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Monitor Update Series differ from those previously approved. The Higher Population Council has also noted that, according to WHO estimates, non-communicable diseases for both sexes were the main cause of the loss of health years due to disability or death but had a more severe impact on females than males, accounting for 76.9% of the loss for females, versus 67.9% for males.<sup>61</sup>

According to the Public Health Law (No. 47 of 2008) and its amendments, Article 4, paragraph D: *"the Ministry is working to achieve health care for women and children by providing them with the necessary services, including care for pregnant women during pregnancy, during childbirth and during the puerperal period, monitoring the development of the child and providing vaccinations, in accordance with the necessary reproductive health requirements and other health matters related to family planning"*. Chapter 2 of the Jordanian Constitution, which explains the rights and duties of Jordanians Men and

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60 World Economic Forum. 2021. Gender Gap Report 2021.

61 Higher Population Council. 2021. Statement on the Gender Gap Report 2021. <https://www.hpc.org.jo>

Women, is devoid of any explicit text about the right to health, even though Article 6, paragraph 5, stipulates that the law protects motherhood, childhood and old age. It must be noted that the WHO indicates that the right to health imposes three obligations on Member States, namely: 1. respect 2. protection 3. performance. It also refers to four key elements, as per the following:

- **Availability** of adequate public health facilities, health-care facilities, goods, services and programmes.
- **Accessibility**, in terms of universal access to facilities, goods and health services within the jurisdiction of the State. Such accessibility must be characterized by non-discrimination, physical accessibility and economic accessibility (i.e., the ability to bearing expenses, as well as the possibility of obtaining information).
- **Admissibility**, in terms of the respect of all facilities, goods and services of health ethics, and the need to be culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender needs and the cycle of life.
- **Quality** of utilities, goods and health services, which are scientifically and medically appropriate and of good quality.

SDG 3, which is related to health and well-being, seeks in Target 1 to reduce global maternal mortality rates to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030, while Target 7 seeks to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive care services, including family planning and awareness-raising services and information, and to integrate reproductive health into national strategies and programmes by 2030.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) also made three commitments:

- Ending preventable maternal and puerperal mortality.
- Ending the unmet needs of modern contraceptives.
- Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices.

It should be noted that Jordan has emphasized its SDG priorities, as well as those of Jordan's *Vision 2025* and its Executive Programme's most prominent commitments related to women, according to the National Reproductive Health Strategy (2020–2030) and the Cost-Effective Family Planning Executive Plan (2020–2024). These include:

1. Jordan should continue to provide quality information, counselling and family planning services, especially in remote areas and to marginalized groups, and to provide family planning methods through the Ministry of Health.
2. Jordan should strive to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality by analysing their causes based on the information of the National Maternal Mortality Registry, while working to address these causes, provide programmes and services and integrate

them into national strategies, policies and programmes for universal health coverage.

3. Jordan will continue to work to reduce sexual and gender-based violence through the implementation of legislation governing the protection from violence and the reduction of child marriage through the implementation of the national plan to reduce marriage for those under 18 (2018–2022) and the JONAP.
4. Jordan should continue to implement national plans that guide international funding for family planning programmes and ensure that all residents have access to sexual and reproductive health services.
5. Jordan should continue to strengthen national statistical systems, build national capacities, provide gender-sensitive national and local data and strengthen institutional mechanisms through the implementation of the National Statistics Strategy (2018–2022).<sup>62</sup>

As for abortion, the Jordanian law differentiates between “spontaneous abortion”, which is the sudden loss of a pregnancy before the twentieth week of gestation without it being induced by the mother or others, as non-criminal and subject to no legal penalty, and “induced abortion”, which is the loss of a pregnancy either by drugs or surgery through the intervention of the mother or others with the aim of getting rid of the pregnancy. In this case, Jordanian legislators step in and the Jordanian Fatwa Council considers such abortions under resolution No. 35 of 1993, which states: *“if the pregnancy affects the life of the mother and threatens her, abortion is permissible even if the fetus exceeds four months, but if the abortion is associated with fetal deformities, it may be aborted with the consent of the spouses, if it does not reach four months. However, if it exceeds four months, it shall not be aborted, irrespective of the extent of the deformity”*. In 2014, the Jordanian Fatwa Council issued resolution 204, regarding the ruling on abortion of pregnancy resulting from rape, leaving it to the Ifta’a Council to decide on a case-by-case basis, after reviewing the circumstances of each case. Articles 321–325 of Jordan’s Penal Code of 1960 and its amendments, stipulate the penalty for abortion and its mitigating and aggravating factors, and Article 12 of the Public Health Law (No. 47 of 2008) allows abortion if the health of the pregnant woman is in danger or if her pregnancy puts her life at risk. However, this article is general and absolute in relation to the health of the mother, which is something that many do not limit to the context of physical health, but rather to also include the psychological and moral health of the mother.

## 6. Women and education:

Jordan supports the education of women and girls, which is one of the most prominent indicators of equality between men and women in Jordan. The Ministry of Education’s

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62 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2019. Report on Jordan’s commitments at the Nairobi Summit, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25).

Strategic Plan (2018–2022) includes information and data on gender and has incorporated the concept of gender equality into the plan’s strategic objectives.

With regard to higher education and to grants and scholarships, the Bylaw of Scholarships and Grants for Expatriates, and its amendments (No. 61 of 2010), does not contain discriminatory provisions, nor does it provide protection against discrimination or any temporary measures to ensure the enrolment of females in scholarships. The same applies to the Bylaw on the Practice of Academic Work in Universities and Community Colleges (No. 19 of 2018) and its amendments, the Bylaw of the Student Support Fund in Jordanian Public Universities (No. 17 of 2018), and the Law on the Vocational Training Institution (No. 11 of 1985), and its amendments.

### **The position and observations of international human rights treaty bodies submitted to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with regard to women and education:**

As stated in the Concluding Observations on Jordan’s sixth periodic report to the CEDAW Committee on 2017: *“The Committee notes with appreciation that gender parity has been reached in primary education and that female enrolment rates in secondary and higher education are now higher than those for men. It further welcomes the measures taken to reduce school dropout and illiteracy rates among girls and boys. The Committee is concerned, however, that: (a) Young married women have limited access to the education system; (b) Female illiteracy and school dropout rates are still high in rural areas and among refugee girls; (c) There is a lack of age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in schools; (d) Traditional images of women’s roles and responsibilities in schoolbooks perpetuate the disadvantaged status of girls and women; (e) Teachers lack training on women’s rights and gender equality and career guidance encouraging women and girls to choose non-traditional career paths is limited, in particular in the fields of science and technology; (f) The number of women and girls in vocational training is limited”*.<sup>63</sup>

Pursuant to Article 10 of the CEDAW Convention, the Committee also draws attention to Target 4.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education that is free of charge, of high-quality and that leads to effective outcomes.

The Committee specifically recommends that Jordan: guarantee support and assistance to pregnant girls and young women and mothers to continue their education; continue efforts to ensure that refugee and rural girls have access to education and to address their high illiteracy and drop-out rates; ensure the inclusion within school curricula of mandatory age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education, including to

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63 CEDAW Committee. 2017. Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Jordan.

address sexual violence; intensify its efforts to review curricula and textbooks at all levels of education with a view to changing existing stereotypical views and the patriarchal attitudes on the roles of women and strengthen teacher training on gender equality and women's rights with the aim of changing current stereotypical views and attitudes about women's roles and men in the family and society; give priority to eliminating traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that may discourage girls from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, such as science and technology, and accelerate efforts to provide girls with career counselling on non-traditional career paths and non-stereotypical vocational training in line with market needs; and promote vocational training opportunities for women and girls, while encouraging them to participate in such training.

## **7. Women and girls with disabilities:**

The legislative environment related to the rights of persons with disabilities in Jordan has evolved over the years through amendments to the Constitution and related laws, and through government strategies and policies that have tried to conform to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. Jordan ratified without any reservations all articles of the Convention in 2008. The Convention includes basic essential principles, the most important of which are: The principle of non-discrimination, the principle of protection from exploitation, violence and abuse, and the principle of the right to privacy and litigation. It also singled out provisions for women with disabilities.<sup>64</sup> Jordan developed a National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2007–2015), and the first comprehensive and inclusive law on persons with disabilities was adopted in 1993 following the adoption of the first Arab Convention on the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, which later amended into the Law in 2007. The most important of its provisions is the establishment of a Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities (in Article 6) and the introduction of the concept of rights in place of the concept of care, focusing on the situation of women and children with disabilities, as well as on the provision of educational and health diagnostic services. It focuses on the health of women with disabilities before, during and after pregnancy, and provides for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in free health insurance (according to Article 4).

The current Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (No. 20 of 2017), which is the first law to outlaw discrimination against persons with disabilities in the Arab region, raises the employment quota for people with disabilities in public and private sectors from 2 to 4%. It focuses on an integration approach, as it requires all ministries and public institutions to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities within specific time frames, while prohibiting all forms of physical and psychological violence. It obliges the

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64 United Nations. 2008. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ministry of Education to provide a facilitating environment in public and private schools and prevent the exclusion of any person from any educational institution on the basis of disability, as is the case with the Ministry of Health, granting health institutions a period of five years to rectify their situation. Health insurance has also been extended to include treatment, medicines, surgeries, vaccines, physiotherapy, speech sessions and aiding tools, such as prosthetics, earphones and glasses. The Constitution was also amended in 2011, specifically in relation to Article 6, paragraph 5, which now states: “[t]he law protects motherhood, childhood and old age, cares for young people and people with disabilities, and protects them from abuse and exploitation”. It should be noted that in 2022, Article 6 of the Constitution was amended to delete the text of paragraph 5 and replace it with the following text: “The law protects the rights of persons with disabilities and promotes their rights, participation and integration in various aspects of life. However, the text of Article 6, paragraph 1, of the Constitution does not refer to disability or gender within the non-discrimination criteria that are defined by language, religion and race.

The Penal Code was amended in 2017 to strengthen and expand the scope of criminal protection for persons with disabilities, removing a clause that was considered discriminatory, as it referred to them as “harmful insane” people, and replacing it with a sentence in Article 467 that refers to “a person with a serious mental or psychological disability”. Also, Articles 289 and 290 were amended to include protection for persons with disabilities, regardless of their age, while tightening punishments for their intentional abandonment and neglect. Likewise, disability is considered an aggravating circumstance in the crime of battery leading to death in Article 330. Meanwhile, Article 346 criminalized the detention of the liberty of a person with disabilities, and the penalty was doubled if the offender had official status, and Article 417 tightened the penalties for fraud if the victim has a physical, psychological or mental disability. Although Article 330 criminalizes the excision of any part of the human body without medical necessity, the crime of forced sterilization of girls with disabilities has not been assigned a special provision or an aggravation of the penalty. This is mentioned, however in an Ifta’a Council decision (No. 194/2014/2), prohibiting the removal of the uterus of girls with disabilities.

The Public Health Law also guarantees persons, including persons with disabilities, the right to full approval of any medical procedure.<sup>65</sup> The Ministry of Social Development has also issued a number of regulations and instructions, the most important of which are: the Bylaw of Centres and Institutions for Persons with Disabilities (No. 40 of 2014); licensing instructions of 2014; the Bylaw of Exemptions in 2013; the Bylaw of Early Intervention in 2016; instructions on electronic protection. In addition, Monitoring Bylaws in Residential and Day Care Homes, established pursuant to Article 28 of the Law on Persons with

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65 Human Rights Council. 2018. Third Universal Periodic Presentation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Disabilities of 2017, laid out inspection and control procedures and provisions for shelters and care centres for persons with disabilities, specifically for persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over who suffer from functional difficulties, who are either not working or looking for work, and which stipulated that disabled women face additional challenges due to gender.<sup>66</sup> The Disabled Persons Employment Bylaw was also enacted in 2021 to create an enabling environment that supports their right to work, based on Article 13 of the Labour Law, which requires them to be employed at a specified rate, as well as on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law of 2017.

On the other hand, these laws, public policies, instructions and procedures do not conclusively contain any provisions that guarantee the political rights of persons with disabilities or to ensure their right of participation and access to polling stations, such as by providing logistical facilitation, sign language interpretation, or by enabling people with disabilities to vote through their escorts. The Independent Electoral Commission was satisfied only with rehabilitating 26% of 86 polling stations, which is not considered sufficient or a guarantee of the right to participation, in accordance with international conventions related to the rights of persons with disabilities.<sup>67</sup> In addition, legislation does not guarantee the right of people with disabilities to representation by expressly providing a specific quota for their representation. In addition, many have objected to the wording of the sixth requirement for membership of the House of Representatives and the Senate, contained in Article 75, paragraph 1, which states that: “[a] member of the House of the Representatives or the Senate shall not be a person who is insane or a lunatic”, since this wording is not sensitive and can be offensive to persons with mental disabilities. It has been proposed that this wording it be replaced by “those who do not have legal capacity”.

Looking at the evolution of legislation and public policies relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, many challenges remain visible, as the legislation still falls short of international standards. On the executive side, a number of ministries and institutions are still unable to develop integration plans and equip them with sufficient human and financial resources. On the awareness and media side, stereotypes still dominate, and awareness and education on the rights of persons with disabilities is modest. On the technical side, efforts to build the capacity of workers in this sector are still far below expectations. Finally, in terms of the enabling environment, there are still many physical, informational and behavioural barriers that prevent a facilitating environment for people with disabilities generally, as well as for those who are most marginalized by a particular disability, and by intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and children.

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66 Higher Population Council. <https://www.hpc.org.jo>.

67 Independent Elections Commission. 2020. Parliamentary Elections 2020 Report.

## 8. Women and girls who are refugees:

Although Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Optional Protocol, which recognizes the international scope of the refugee crises and the need for international cooperation, in accordance with the principle of burden-sharing among Member States, the Jordanian Constitution provides in Article 21, paragraph 1 that: “*political refugees shall not be extradited on account of their political beliefs or for their defense of liberty*”. Throughout its 100-year history, Jordan has been one of the most welcoming countries of refugees, from Russia, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan and others. In order to resolve the problem of non-signature, Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR in 1998, Article 5 of which stipulates that: “*the granting of asylum is primarily a peaceful humanitarian act; that refugees are treated in accordance with recognized international standards; that refugees are given legal status; that UNHCR will work to find a permanent solution for refugees by securing their return to their home country or resettlement in a third country, provided that temporary residency does not exceed six months.*”<sup>68</sup> According to UNHCR figures, there are more than 90,000 registered refugees other than Syrians in Jordan, including 67,088 Iraqis, 14,789 from Yemen, 6,077 Sudanese, 746 Somalis and 1,615 of other nationalities.<sup>69</sup> Also, more than 2.4 million registered Palestinian refugees live in Jordan, most of whom enjoy full Jordanian citizenship, with the exception of about 140,000 refugees originally from Gaza, who came under the Egyptian administration in 1967 – 18% of whom live in refugee camps, provided for and operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Founded in 1949, it provides services in 10 internationally recognized refugee camps, where it has established about 171 schools and 25 health centres, noting that the Jordanian Government recognizes 13 camps where services and subsidies are provided.

Needless to say, Jordan has demonstrated a pioneering humanitarian stance, as it has hosted more than 1.3 million Syrians since the beginning of the crisis in 2011. The number of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR is about 655,560 refugees, with females accounting for almost 50% of the Syrian refugee population (328,072) until the beginning of 2020. More than 81% of them reside in urban areas, and there are five camps in Jordan, three of which are official and two of which are temporary. The Government considers Jordan’s Response Plan to the Syrian crisis as the only reference for determining the necessary needs to reduce the impact of hosting Syrian refugees, support host communities, and support the Treasury. The plan covers the following key sectors, namely: education; health and environment, water and sanitation; social protection, justice and housing; public services (that include municipal services and

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68 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MoFA), Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA).

69 UNHCR figures, as cited in Al-Sabah, Anas et. al. 2020. The Study of Successive Waves of Asylum and Migration on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and their Effects over a Hundred Years. Yarmouk University.

local governance), energy and transport; and the economic empowerment sector (that includes intersections related to food security and livelihoods). It must be noted that after the coronavirus pandemic swept the world, including Jordan, the Response Plan for the Syria crisis for the years 2021–2023 was updated, with a new item was added to the three main items related to the response to the pandemic. It should be mentioned that in 2020, Jordan's Syria Response Plan funding amounted to 49.4% of the total required. Jordan is one of the countries in the world that started vaccinating refugees and included them in its national COVID-19 vaccination strategy. It is one of 50 countries that have done so, out of 90 states that are hosting refugees, and non-Jordanians have been allowed to register directly on the vaccination platform, and any refugee can register using the personal number in their passport or the Syrian Service Card issued by Jordanian Ministry of Interior or the asylum document issued by UNHCR.<sup>70</sup> It is known that refugee women, especially girls, are one of the most vulnerable and weak groups, as they are more vulnerable to child marriage,<sup>71</sup> early pregnancy and risky forms of work, and after the pandemic, the conditions that make them more vulnerable and marginalized have worsened. The school and business closures, lockdowns, home quarantines and the economic and financial repercussions on Syrian families have contributed to an increase in cases of domestic violence and the marriage of minors, and contracts for the marriage of minors have seen an increase in 2020 among the 15–18 age group, most of which are for refugee women.

The report of the Supreme Judges Department for the year 2020 showed that 46.5% of divorced females were under 25 years of age.<sup>72</sup> A Higher Population Council study cites the main reasons for child marriage as: 1) economic, given the desire of poor families to reduce their expenses, 2) the desire of parents to protect their children from violence, 3) reasons related to pressures and social norms in certain social groups.<sup>73</sup> There is no doubt that this phenomenon deprives girls of completing their education and developing the skills and competencies for decent work opportunities, thus depriving them of an effective contribution to the development of the family and society. It should be noted that the Personal Status Act (No. 15 of 2019), in Article 10, sets the age of marriage at 18, but in paragraph B of the same article, an exception is allowed for those who have reached the age of 16, with the consent of the Supreme Judge, provided that there is a necessity in accordance with instructions issued to that end.

It should be also noted that basic education for the age group 6–16 years is mandatory and free of charge in public schools, in accordance with Article 10 of the Education Law (No.

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70 UNHCR 2020 data, as cited in <https://www.almamlakatv.com/news/70533-909>.

71 Primarily affecting girls between the ages of 15–18.

72 Supreme Judges Department. 2020. Reports.

73 Higher Population Council. 2019. Study of marriage of minors.

3 of 1994) and its amendments. Accordingly, some consider it necessary to raise the age of exception in marriage to above the age of completion of 16, because the occurrence of marriage often prevents them from completing compulsory basic education. Despite the great efforts made by Jordan to integrate refugee education into the national education system – with more than 136,000 Syrian refugee children (male and female) enrolled in government education, out of a total of about 233,000 Syrian school-age children – there has been fallout from the pandemic and the closure of in-person schooling in Jordan. The shift to online learning led to difficulties in adapting to the new situation, with refugees suffering more than others. In Jordan, 23% of Syrian refugees do not have an Internet connection at home, and two-thirds rely on limited Internet bundles,<sup>74</sup> not to mention the limited number of smart devices within a family household, which is an additional barrier to girls' access to the available e-learning platforms.

Despite its scarcity of resources and modest capabilities, Jordan has not stopped its programmes, plans and commitments to Syrian refugees, including allowing them to work in the local market in certain professions, while exempting them from paying work permit fees. According to Ministry of Labour data, the number of permit-holders until the end of 2020 reached 216,000 workers, of whom 205,000 were male and 11,000 female. In response to the London Conference in 2016, they enjoy all labour rights, but most of these permits are in the agricultural and construction sectors, which are usually dominated by males. Additionally, programmes have been launched to employ Syrians, such as the programme to provide economic opportunities for Jordanian and Syrian refugees. Exempting work permit fees greatly supports home-based work, a sector dominated by women. It also contributes to providing more job opportunities for refugee women and introducing organizational reforms at the municipal level to overcome work obstacles, the most important of which is a safe work environment and the problem of transportation. An education programme for employment was also created that works to create a link between Syrian refugee women and Jordanian youth on the one hand, and employers, craft teachers and start-up financing services on the other hand. Since 2017, 81% of graduates of entrepreneurship programmes have been linked to support for emerging business activities, such as restaurants, bakeries, knitting and beauty salons in homes. Notable initiatives include the IKEA company's efforts to employ Syrian women in handicrafts from inside homes, as well as the Yud Be Yud (hand-in-hand) initiative, to which the Ministry of Social Development contributes, which provides protection services, training on violence against women, vocational training, employment and childcare services for Syrian mothers.<sup>75</sup>

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74 United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reports 2020.

75 World Bank Reports. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ar/voices/khms-astatyjyat-ltjawz-mwqat-altshghyl-alty-twajhha-allajyat-alswryat-alshabat>

## 9. The girl child:

As part of the amendments to the Constitution in 2011, Jordan introduced a provision relating to the protection of children, amending Article 6, to add paragraph 5 that states: *“the law protects motherhood, childhood and old age, cares for young people and persons with disabilities and protects them from abuse and exploitation”*. However, Jordan does not have comprehensive legislation on the rights of the child. The National Council for Family Affairs has prepared a draft Child Law, which adopts the principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, namely, the principle of protection against discrimination, taking into thorough consideration the best interests of the child, their right to development and the protection of special groups of children. It has also organized several activities to garner support for the draft law’s enactment. It is reported that the Jordanian Government had approved a draft law on the rights of the child and sent it to Parliament, which was on the agenda of the House of Representatives from 2004 until 2006, until it was withdrawn in order to bring it in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child after its ratification by the Parliament and publication in the Official Gazette in 2006, with its reservation to Articles 14 (relating to freedom of thought and conscience) and 20 and 21 (relating to the adoption system).

One of the activities carried out by the National Council for Family Affairs to assist with passage of the law was a study to assess the costs of the proposed child rights laws. Completed in 2019 and updated in 2020, the study aimed at assessing the cost of implementing the law, analysing the socioeconomic (short-and long-term) dividends and determining its cost-effectiveness. The results of the study indicate that there is a strong case for investing in the draft child rights law, and that the expected investments in priority programmes constitute less than 1% of total budget expenditures for 2019. Moreover, priority programmes under the draft law can be funded through the reprioritization by the Government and through donor support. The study also emphasizes that the law will guarantee the rights of children in Jordan to obtain good levels of education and health care, and to live a life free from violence. The study says investing in the law’s implementation will accelerate Jordan’s progress towards achieving the SDGs, in particular Goal 3 on health, Goal 4 on education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 10 on reducing inequalities, and Goal 16.2 on access to justice, specifically to address violence against children.<sup>76</sup>

With regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Jordan has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention relating to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (of 2000) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (of 2000).

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<sup>76</sup> National Council for Family Affairs, UNICEF and Oxford Policy Management. 2020. Cost estimation study of child and juvenile rights laws in Jordan: State of investment in child rights. p. 25.

In the absence of a uniform Child Law, matters relating to children are regulated by many Jordanian laws, the most prominent of which include:

**1) The Juvenile Law (No. 32 of 2014)**<sup>77</sup> is an important step towards harmonizing Jordanian legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adopting the philosophy of restorative justice and the principle of the best interest of the child, it regulates matters related to two categories of children:

A. Delinquent children who are in conflict with the law: Setting the age of criminal responsibility at 12 years, the Juvenile Law established rules and procedures for the prosecution of juveniles, and adopts a policy of restorative justice, with the need to resort to conflict resolution and non-custodial punishments. The right to legal assistance is granted and a juvenile may only be tried in the presence of a parent, guardian or custodian, the presence of a probation officer and a juvenile lawyer. The Ministry of Social Development plays an important role in the upbringing of juveniles, in particular the detention of children during trial or after a court judgement has been handed down. A female centre, called the Juvenile Care Centre, has also been set up.

B. Children in need of protection and care: are defined by Article 33 according to the following categories:

- If he/she is under the care of a person who is not qualified to care for them, because of habitual criminality, addiction to alcohol, narcotic substances and psychotropic substances abuse, ethical deviation, or if they have been convicted of an immoral offence with any of his/her children or any of those entrusted under their care.
- If he/she performs acts related to prostitution, debauchery, corruption of morality, gambling or any illegal acts; provides services to those who perform such acts; or consorts with or are exploited by anyone who is notorious for misbehaviour, including acts of begging or vagrancy.
- If he/she does not have a permanent residence or is homeless on the streets.
- If he/she has no legitimate means of livelihood or has no reliable breadwinner, and his/her father, mother or guardian is deceased, imprisoned or absent.
- If he/she is very naughty and outside the authority of his/her father, guardian, custodian or mother, or the guardian is deceased, absent or legally incapacitated.
- If he/she is begging and/or covering it up by any means.
- If he/she is a street peddler or rummages through garbage.
- If he/she has suffered intentional harm from his/her parents, or guardian, in excess of the disciplinary measures permitted by law and accepted by public norms.
- If he/she is in serious danger if he/she remains in his/her family.
- If he/she is less than 12 years old and has committed a misdemeanor or felony.
- If he/she is a working child, contrary to the legislation in force.

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<sup>77</sup> Juvenile Law published in the Official Gazette (no. 531, dated 2 November 2014). p. 6371.

In these cases, the courts may take measures to refer the child to a juvenile care home or any similar accredited institution, or to place him/her under the care of an appropriate person or family for the period determined by the courts or place him/her under the supervision of a probation officer. The Ministry of Social Development administers juvenile care homes. The House of Al-Khansa'a has been allocated to female juveniles, and the Family and Juvenile Protection Department has been assigned to implement the law, after this was initially assigned to the Juveniles Department, and judicial bodies were assigned to juvenile cases in the first instance and at Appeal Courts stages, with the following regulations and instructions issued under the law:

- The Juvenile Dispute Settlement Bylaw (No. 2/1 of 2016).
- The Juvenile Aftercare Bylaw (No. (67) of 2006).
- Instructions for determining the requirements and information to be available in behavioural observers reports, of 2015.
- Instructions on the basis for classification of non-deprivation of liberty penalties, of 2015.
- Instructions for granting leave to juveniles, of 2015.

The law permits the use of modern technology in witness hearing proceedings. The powers of the Sharia Court overlap with those of the Juvenile Court in several cases, particularly those relating to girls in need of protection and care. A decision may be made by a juvenile judge to place the girl child in the care of a person or family he/she deems appropriate, while the Sharia Court decides on custody to persons other than those decided on by the juvenile judge.

**2) The Personal Status Law (No. 5 of 2019 )** makes no distinction between male and female children in terms of alimony, custody and visitation. It provides that the alimony for a girl extends until even after the completion of her university studies, until she has earned sufficient money from her work or has a husband (who is required to provide for her). Recent amendments to the law have expanded the use of scientific evidence to establish lineage and this is not restricted by the existence of a valid marriage contract or the father's confirmation; in accordance with Article 157 of the law, and the Law on the Formation of Sharia Courts of 2015, whereby a public prosecutor position has been established in Sharia Courts, whose functions include the protection of minors and cases of proof of lineage. The law regulates the Sharia Courts' implementation of decisions on custody, visitation and alimony for children. The Alimony Credit Fund was established in 2015 based on the Alimony Credit Bylaw (No. 48 of 2015), which facilitated the procedures for collecting alimony within the stipulated terms and conditions.

The Personal Status Law set the legal age of marriage at 18, but allowed the marriage of male and female minors without discrimination for those who had reached the age of 16 calendar years, provided that there was a necessity based on the child's best interest, and that it had the permission of a judge and approval of a supreme judge. The Supreme Judge's Department issued the Instruction for Granting Permission to Marry (No. 1 of 2017) to establish the criteria for granting permission to marry, namely that: the suitor must be competent to be betrothed (socially and materially); that the judge must verify the consent and the complete satisfaction and choice; that the court must verify that the necessity would prevent mischief and bring benefits, as it deems appropriate from the means of verification; that the age difference between the two parties should not exceed 15 years, that the suitor should not be married already; that the marriage should not be used as a reason for dropping out of school; that the suitor's be able to prove their ability to pay the dowry and prepare the marital home; and upon presentation of the approved medical examination document (which is done prior to marriage to detect any infections or genetic disorders). The law or instructions do not specify any consequences as a result of these conditions being violated. A National Plan to reduce child marriage (for those under the age of 18) was developed in 2018 with a participatory mechanism. However, the Beijing+25 Comprehensive National Review of progress stated that the implementation of the plan at the national level faces many challenges related to the allocation of budgets through ministries and entities involved in its clear implementation.<sup>78</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the Personal Status Law does not specify an age for betrothal, and that Supreme Judges' Department data indicate that there has been an increase in the marriage of minors in 2020, in light of the pandemic, with the rate reaching 11.8% (up from 10.6% in 2019).<sup>79</sup> Jurists see a link between the increase in the number of marriages of minors and the shift to distance education, and many official bodies and civil society organizations link the marriage of underage girls to negative health effects of this marriage. A Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health in the field of family planning (2019–2023) was prepared,<sup>80</sup> to which the Directorate of Family and Childhood Affairs within the Ministry of Health contributed, which states that: *“Adolescent childbirth is an important issue because of its health risks that make young mothers more vulnerable to the risks of illness, death and harmful pregnancy outcomes, as well as the consequent reduction of their opportunities to pursue their education and engage in the labour market in the*

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78 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2019. Comprehensive national review of progress towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years. April. p. 7.

79 Supreme Judges Department. 2020. <https://sjd.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/PDFs/AR/AppliedLegislations/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%88%D9%8A%20%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%202019.pdf>.

80 The Strategic Plan is published on the Ministry of Health website [www.moh.gov.jo](http://www.moh.gov.jo), p. 17.

*future*". Moreover, according to the 2017–2018 Family Health and Population Survey, 5% of women in the age group from 15–19 have started giving birth.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, adolescent girls should be targeted by women's empowerment programmes to enable them to make decisions about their lives and family, and so that all women in the age groups of 15–29 years can resort to traditional and modern means of family planning. The Strategic Plan notes that: "*early marriage has a clear impact on reproductive health because they [young mothers] are inexperienced and under the control of others*". The Ministry of Health has targeted all age groups with its reproductive health guidance programmes, noting that the Strategy states that reproductive rates are significantly lower in the 15–19 age group. The Plan's statement on reproductive trends,<sup>82</sup> points out that the desire to have a male child is a strong motivation for procreation in both men and women, as couples feel pressured to have children until a male child is born, even if they reach their ideal family size (the desired number of children) and couples also feel marginalized by society's negative attitude towards families whose children are only female, so much so that this pressure may result in the man marrying another woman.

**3) Labour Code (No. 8 of 1996) and its amendments** contain provisions relating to child labour, prohibiting the employment of "juveniles", which it described as persons who have not reached the age of 16. Article 74 prohibits the employment of juveniles in hazardous, burdensome or health-damaging work, which is to be determined by the minister concerned. Article 75 prohibits the employment of juveniles for more than 6 hours per day, provided that they are given a rest period of at least one hour after working four hours in a row. It prohibits their employment between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. and on religious, public and weekly holidays. The offending employer is punished with a fine of no less than JOD 200 and no more than JOD 500.

Jordan is also party to international conventions relating to child labour, including ILO Convention 138 of 1997, which sets the minimum age for work to after the completion of compulsory education, and no younger than 15 years of age. It also and prohibits the employment of children until the age of 18 in jobs that are likely to endanger their health, safety or morals because of the nature or conditions in which they are performed. ILO Convention 82 of 2000 emphasizes the importance of free basic education and the rehabilitation and social integration of working children, while taking into account the needs of their families. It bans child labour and all forms of slavery and slavery-like types of work (including prostitution and drug production or work that harms children's health, safety or morals). As a result, a National Commission for Children's Work was established.

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81 Ibid. p. 16.

82 Ibid. p. 26.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for following up on international labour agreements and other agreements related to child labour and for following up on the implementation of the Labour Law, its supervision and inspection. It created a special inspection section for child labour and approved the national framework to limit cases of begging and working children. The Ministry's National Strategy to Reduce Child Labour 2017–2021<sup>83</sup> also integrated the concept of gender equality and child protection in its plans and objectives, counting the number of children who are trained and qualified after their withdrawal from the labour market as one of its performance indicators for the objectives of the strategy, and the reduction of child labour as one of its projects. The previous National Strategy to Reduce Child Labour, of 2006, included information and data on working children, by occupation, child income, size of establishment, job characteristics and educational level, but it did not include any data on the distribution of working children by gender. Nonetheless, the child labour database indicates that: “[a]bout (86%) of working children belong to families with social problems such as divorce, death of one or both parents or polygamy”. The data tables on health problems suffered by working children do not contain any information specific to the working girl child.<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, Article 6 of the Agricultural Workers Act of 2021 prohibits: “A. [t]he employment of a juvenile who has not completed 16 years of age in agricultural work; B. [a] juvenile who has not completed 18 years of age may not be employed in agricultural work that is dangerous, burdensome or harmful to health, and these types of work shall be determined by a decision by the competent minister”.

**4) The Penal Code**, in its Article 62, allows for the discipline of children, specifying that: “1. [t]he Act authorized by law shall not be considered a crime. 2. The law permits: a) The types of discipline that parents use with their children in a manner that does not cause them harm or injury in all of its forms (physical and moral) as permitted by public norms”. This article, even after its amendment, has been the subject of much criticism from human rights organizations. The Penal Code tightened the penalties for crimes of sexual assault and indecent assault, such as rape, if they were committed against children or by those who had jurisdiction or authority over them, as previously stated. It also criminalized intercourse with a minor, did not accept consent in such sexual relations, and provided greater penal protection for girls. The Penal Code criminalized abortion, child neglect and child prostitution, and contained special provisions relating to killing by a mother of her newborn, as previously detailed.

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83 On the website of the Ministry of Labour there is a form for reporting a working child, at [www.mol.gov.jo](http://www.mol.gov.jo).

84 Ministry of Labour. 2006. National Strategy to Reduce Child Labour. Ministry of Labour Website [www.mol.gov.jo](http://www.mol.gov.jo).

Other articles of the Penal Code, to which no specific provision is made, apply to offences against children, such as abuse, and to violence against children in the family, school or care centres. With regard to violence committed by public officials, Article 69.1 of the Civil Service Bylaw prohibits any form of corporal punishment against any child in any educational, rehabilitative, training, care or protection institutions or homes, or any act that causes harm to any child. Protection is explicitly provided for in paragraph F of the same article, which prohibits the practice of physical, verbal or sexual conduct, or associated threats, which are offensive to the dignity of others and humiliating to them, and/or leads to their physical, psychological or sexual harm, all under penalty of disciplinary responsibility and without discrimination in protection between female and male children. However, girls only benefit from the protection from harassment accorded by the Labour Law.

There are no penalties specified in the Penal Law or in the Law of the Ministry of Education for the non-compliance of parents, guardians or custodians with compulsory education, which is a contributing factor in the problem of school truancy. It is worth mentioning that kindergarten is not considered compulsory education.

**5) The Cybercrime Law (No. 27 of 2015) and its amendments** contain provisions to protect male and female children from the use of the Internet in the disclosure, preservation, processing, display, printing, publication or promotion of pornographic activities or works to influence those under the age of 18, or to exploit them for prostitution or sexual acts. A Cybercrimes Unit was established in the Public Security Directorate; however, it should be noted that cases of sexual exploitation of children over the Internet are the specific jurisdiction of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, and the Cybercrimes Unit does not deal with them directly.

### **The position and observations of international human rights treaty bodies on the girl child:**

The Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports submitted by Jordan in 2014<sup>85</sup> contained recommendations relating to: "*[s]trengthening data collection mechanisms by establishing a central database on children, and ensuring that data on all areas covered by the convention are collected and disaggregated by criteria, including: Age for all persons under 18 years old, gender, urban and rural areas and categories of children in need of special protection*". Indicators consistent with the Convention should be developed and used to formulate policies and programmes aimed at its effective implementation. The Committee also urged Jordan to

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85 Committee on the Rights of the Child. 2014. Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports submitted by Jordan. CRC/C/JOR/CO/4-5, document A GE.14-07681.

enact the Child Rights Act without delay and to ensure that it includes all of the rights and principles enshrined in the Convention. It also urged Jordan to repeal all legislation that discriminates against girls without further delay. It recommended that Jordan give priority to adopting a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of discrimination against girls, and gender and sexual stereotypes that are still prevalent and lead to discrimination and violence against girls. The Committee reiterates its recommendation that local leaders, clerics and other leaders should be invited to play a more active role in supporting efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against girls and provide guidance to local communities in that regard. The Committee drew attention to Jordan's adoption, in its General Comment No. 8 of 2006 on the rights of the child, to the need for protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment. The Committee stressed the rejection of all forms of violence against children, however minor, and that parental powers should in no case undermine the rights of the child to be protected from corporal punishment.

The Committee also urged Jordan to repeal Article 62 of the Penal Code without further delay, to categorically prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, to ensure the effective implementation of laws prohibiting corporal punishment and to systematically file lawsuits against those who punish children physically. It recommended establishing permanent programmes in the areas of public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization, with the participation of children, families, local communities and clergy, to address the adverse physical and psychological effects of corporal punishment, with a view to changing public attitudes towards these practices. It also recommended that Jordan promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-upbringing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment, and to ensure the involvement and participation of society as a whole, including children, in the design and implementation of strategies to prevent the physical punishment of children. With regard to child marriage, the Committee urged Jordan to take effective measures to put an end to this practice, reiterating its recommendation that Jordan implement awareness-raising campaigns on the many negative effects of early marriage.

### **Authors' recommendations for policies governing the rights of the child, and girls in particular:**

- Adopt the draft Child Rights Law prepared by the National Council for Family Affairs.
- Update the National Strategy for the Reduction of Child Labour to include gender-based data and statistics and conduct a statistical survey of child labour, as the last survey was conducted in 2016.
- Integrate the specific needs of girls into all strategies, plans and programmes for women and children and include the need to collect their own data.

- Take action at the social policy level to address the problem of child labour and vagrancy, improve the economic conditions of their families, and provide a network of social and psychological support to children and their families.
- Provide mandatory legal mechanisms for all children addressing the problem of school truancy. Compensate for educational losses, to ensure that all girls and boys enjoy free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, as per SDG target 4.6: *“By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”*.
- Develop an action plan to address all the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls and ensure their right to in-person education at all levels, especially at kindergarten and elementary levels.

## Chapter 2: Gender equality from a statistical perspective

### Summary:

Monitoring progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls cannot be achieved without data and information that is thorough and detailed by gender, age, disability and other important characteristics. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires high-quality, detailed and constantly updated data, that are analysed and disseminated to decision-makers from governmental institutions, and to all interested academic, civil society, private sector and media institutions. Indicators contribute to improving policies and programmes. The planning, evaluation and development of governmental policies depend on indicators to develop more effective interventions and programmes that achieve the goal of gender equality and, consequently, of gender inclusion.

This chapter details the data, information and figures available in Jordan that are disaggregated by gender in different areas, specifically demographics, health and well-being, disability, education, economic participation, political participation, gender-based violence, as well as on issues such as child labour, child marriage and women migrant workers. This chapter also dealt with an analysis of the availability of indicators for the fifth goal of the sustainable development goals 2030 titled “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, which showed that the percentage of the indicators of the fifth goal available in Jordan and published on the global database of sustainable development goals indicators is 50%, while this percentage rises to 64% in the National database of indicators of sustainable development goals issued by the Department of Statistics. This analysis led to the identification of data deficiencies, where available and has revealed the need to produce data that are not currently available, either from the Department of Statistics (DoS) or from other governmental agencies, such as ministries and official institutions.

In terms of **demographics**, DoS has 2020 population estimates of 10.8 million, with females accounting for 47% and males for 53% of the population, for a gender ratio of 112.5 males per 100 females. It has sex-disaggregated data on the median age and household heads. Data are also available on the total fertility rate, for Jordanian and non-Jordanian women, the crude marriage and divorce rates, and the dependency ratio (which reached 61.4 people per 100 people of working age in 2020).

In the area of **health and well-being**, there are sex-disaggregated data on life expectancy and the number of people with health insurance or certain diseases (such as anemia). There are data on the number of male and female doctors per 10,000 citizens, inhabitants per pharmacy, and inhabitants per hospital bed, as well as how many childbirths are

attended by a trained doctor or health-provider, nurse or legally approved midwife. There are also women-specific data on the average duration of breastfeeding, the crude birth rate, maternal mortality rate, and use of family planning methods by married women. With regard to **disability**, 11.1% of Jordan's total population suffers from some form of impaired bodily function, and males experience this more than females (11.5 versus 10.6%, respectively).

In the field of **education**, there are data on the number of registered nurseries, enrolment and how many are enrolled. Only 13% of young children, female and male, in Jordan (aged 36–59 months) were enrolled in early childhood education programmes in 2017–2018.; the number of students enrolled in the primary and secondary stages of the academic year and how many are girls; the total number of students enrolled in Jordanian universities and how many are female (55.6% at the Bachelor level in 2019/2020); as well as the number of graduates of the Vocational and Educational Training Institution in Jordan and how many were female (40% in 2019).

In the area of **economic participation**, there are sex-disaggregated data on the unemployment rate and the economic participation rate, with further details on age and educational attainment. There are also data available on net job opportunities created for women (20.6% of the total in 2019); the percentage of working women subscribed to social security (29% in 2019); the ratio of Jordanians working in the informal sector (41% women versus 53% men); and the average monthly gender wage gap for workers in the public and private sectors (JOD 540 for males versus JOD 484 for females).

With regard to **economic independence**, there are sex-disaggregated data on whether individuals decide on their own how to use their financial resources, as well as data on land and property ownership, including how many have one or more agricultural holdings and their total area.

In the field of **political participation**, there are plenty of data on Jordanian women's candidacies and elected seats in several municipal, decentralization and national (upper and lower house) councils since they gained the right to vote and to run for office in 1974. There are also data on women in political parties (35.3%) and the scant number of women who have won the presidency of councils or been appointed to ministerial or general secretary positions. Data are available on women's leadership in several sectors and decision-making roles, the highest percentages of which are in the public sector (48%).

In the area of **gender-based violence**, the Population and Family Health Survey of 2017–2018 provides several insights on incidence (25.9% of ever-married women aged 15–49

had experienced physical and/or sexual or emotional violence from their husbands, compared to 1.4% of ever-married men). There are also raw numbers detailing complaints of crimes against morality, homicides, online bullying and the total number of victims of domestic violence. The Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD) received 17,693 cases, of which 5,008 were referred to prosecution.

The rate of **child marriage** was 11.8% in 2020, and 93,025 marriages of minors were registered in the 10-year period between 2011–2020. Since the beginning of 2021, the Anti-Trafficking Unit has dealt with 108 cases of suspected human trafficking. A 2016 national survey provides data on the **number of working children** in Jordan between the ages of 5 and 17: 75,982, of whom 8,868 were girls (11.7%).

This chapter concludes with a set of recommendations, including: the need to develop statistical systems to keep pace with rapid changes in statistics; provide more information and data on gender-based violence; train staff of DoS, ministries, governmental institutions, the military and security sectors and civil society on gender-sensitive data and reports; and ensure that gender data reach decision-makers, so they can be used in developing legislation, policies, strategies, programmes and operational plans, and to monitor Jordan's progress on SDG indicators.

### **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5:**

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with the countries of the world at a United Nations Summit in September of 2015, becoming one of the Member States to work hard to achieve these goals. Among the 17 SDGs, Goal 5 calls for: *“achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls”*. It includes a set of objectives to end discrimination, violence and harmful practices, recognize unpaid care work and elevate its value, and promote women's participation and leadership in decision-making, while calling for universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights. Goal 5's targets have been translated into effective and usable indicators for monitoring purposes, to measure progress towards the goal.

In Jordan's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of 2017 on the SDGs, in relation to achieving SDG Goal 5, the Government of Jordan pledged to: continue to mainstream a gender perspective in all national development plans in line with the SDGs; identify gaps in gender indicators; and establish a new gender database. Priorities also include strengthening the National Statistical System and developing national capacities to integrate a gender perspective in all phases of SDG monitoring – including identifying gender indicator gaps, as well as supporting the coordination of NGO efforts and their capacities in gender mainstreaming, monitoring and awareness-raising on the SDGs.

The global SDG indicators database shows that 50% of Goal 5 indicators are available in Jordan. In contrast, this percentage rises to 64% in the national SDG indicators database,<sup>86</sup> as per the table below.

Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls			
Target	Indicator	Availability of indicator in the global database	Availability of indicator in the national database
5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.	5.1.1. Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.	Available	Available
5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.	5.2.1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.	Available	Available
	5.2.2. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.	Unavailable	Unavailable

86 Department of Statistics (DoS). N.D. "Sustainable Development <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/sdgs/>

**Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls**

Target	Indicator	Availability of indicator in the global database	Availability of indicator in the national database
5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.	5.3.1. Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.	Available	Available
	5.3.2. Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age	Unavailable	Unavailable
5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family, as nationally appropriate.	5.4.1. Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location.	Unavailable	Unavailable
5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.	5.5.1. Proportion of seats held by women in a) national parliaments and b) local governments.	Available	Available
	5.5.2. Proportion of women in managerial positions.	Unavailable	Unavailable

**Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls**

Target	Indicator	Availability of indicator in the global database	Availability of indicator in the national database
5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.	5.6.1. Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.	Available	Available
	5.6.2. Number of countries with laws and regulations to guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.	Unavailable	Unavailable
5.a. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.	5.a.1. a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.	Unavailable	Available
	5.a.2. Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.	Available	Available

**Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls**

Target	Indicator	Availability of indicator in the global database	Availability of indicator in the national database
5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.	5.b.1. Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.	Unavailable	Available
5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.	5.c.1. Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.	Available	Available

## 1. Demographics

Available data from population censuses indicate that Jordan's population doubled in size 46 times between 1922 and 2020. The results of the General Population and Housing Census of 1979 show that about half of the population 49.9% was under 15 years of age. As a result of significant changes in fertility and mortality levels, especially during the period from 1979–1994, the percentage of the population under the age of 15 declined to 41.4% in 1994 and continued to decline in subsequent periods, reaching 34.3% in 2015. Jordan's population growth rate is by all accounts high, and this unprecedented rise is due to the widening gap between birth and death rates on the one hand and exposure to forced migration on the other hand.<sup>87</sup>

According to the 2020 population estimates, Jordan has a population of 10.8 million, with females accounting for 47% and males 53%. With regard to nationality, non-Jordanians accounted for 31% of the population, of which 42% were women.<sup>88</sup> Looking at the distribution of the population by urban and rural areas, the percentage of the country's

87 DoS. N.D. General Population and Housing Censuses, 1979–2015. <https://bit.ly/3jf8wK>.

88 DoS. 2015. Population Census 2015: Analytical report on immigration. [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_a/main/population/census2015/Analytical\\_reports/Immigration.pdf](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/population/census2015/Analytical_reports/Immigration.pdf).

urban population increased to 90.3% in 2020. In contrast, the percentage of its rural population decreased significantly to a mere 9.7% in 2020.<sup>89</sup>

### **1- Median age of the population:**

In 2020, the median age of the population (the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older), was 22.9 years for both genders, 23.3 years for males and 22.3 years for females, meaning the median age of males is one year older than for females.<sup>90</sup>

### **2- Total fertility Rate (TFR):**

The Demographic and Health Survey defines the total fertility rate as the average number of children a woman would have by the end of her childbearing years if she bore children at the current age-specific fertility rates. Age-specific fertility rates are calculated for the three years before the survey, based on detailed birth histories provided by women. For the years 2017–2018, The TFR was 2.7 births per woman, which varied between urban areas (2.7 births per woman) and rural areas (3.1 births per woman).<sup>91</sup> The TFR of non-Jordanians was higher, especially among Syrian women, at 4.7 births per woman.<sup>92</sup>

### **3- Gender ratio (number of males per 100 females):**

The demographics composition reflects the relative size of the total population based on gender and age and is important in relation to gender. The gender ratio for different age groups is 112.5 males per 100 females. The highest gap is found in the 25–29 age group (where there are 124 males per 100 females) and the lowest in the 65 and over age group (with 102.3 males per 100 females). The gender ratio at birth in Jordan is 105.3 males per 100 females.<sup>93</sup>

### **4- Age of marriage and childbearing:**

Jordan signed the Agreement on Consent to Marriage, the Minimum Age for Marriage and the Registration of Marriage Contracts<sup>94</sup> in 1992 although the Personal Status Law also stipulates<sup>95</sup> that the minimum age for marriage is 18 years, in exceptional cases, marriages between the ages of 15 and 18 years are permitted.<sup>96</sup> The average age at first

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89 DoS. 2020. Population of Jordan, 1952–2020. <https://bit.ly/3A9LLOL>.

90 DoS. 2020. Population of Jordan, 2020. <https://bit.ly/3xloeFH>.

91 DoS. 2019. Book: Jordan in Figures. <https://bit.ly/3A23mrG>

92 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

93 DoS. 2019. Jordan in Figures, 2019. <https://bit.ly/3A23mrG>.

94 United Nations. 1964. Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage. <https://bit.ly/37i5Zt2>.

95 Personal Status Law (No. 15 of 2019). <https://bit.ly/2ViXyvd>.

96 Supreme Judges Department. 2017. Instructions for granting permission to marry for those who have completed at least 15 calendar years (No. 1 of 2017). <https://bit.ly/2TV1xoq>.

marriage in Jordan was 29.2 years for both sexes, but higher for males (31.3 years) than females (26.6 years).<sup>97</sup>

The Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018 showed the percentage of young women aged 15-19 who were married and had a child before the age 15 was 1.2%. By nationality, 1.9% were Jordanian, 18.9% were Syrian, and 8.1% were of other nationalities; among those were pregnant with their first child: 1.2% were Jordanian, 8.9% were Syrian and 3.7% were of other nationalities; and among those who had begun child-rearing: 3.1% were Jordanian, 27.8% were Syrian, and 11.8% were other nationalities.<sup>98</sup>

### **5- Households headed by women:**

The number of households in Jordan reached 2.2 million, of which roughly 392,3000 were headed by women. Divorce, celibacy or widowhood, among other reasons, compel women to support and head their families. According to the estimated population and families' numbers table 2020, the percentage of households headed by women increased significantly, to 17.5% of all Jordanian households in 2020.<sup>99</sup> In terms of the marital status of Jordanian women heads of household, the majority are widows (74.7%), 11.8% are married, 7.5% are single, 5.8% are divorced and 0.2% are separated.<sup>100</sup>

### **6- Marriage and divorce:**

The crude marriage rate decreased to 6.2/1,000 inhabitants in 2020 compared to 2019 (6.4/1,000), and the crude divorce rate was 1.6/1,000 inhabitants in 2020, versus 1.8/1,000 in 2019. The pandemic did not affect the marriage contracts registered in Jordan, which decreased slightly, but it negatively affected the marriage of minors, which saw an increase of 740 contracts. Meanwhile, the pandemic decreased the number of divorces significantly, by 2,097 divorces compared to the number in 2019.<sup>101</sup>

Divorce within a year of marriage (now referred to as 'early divorce') accounted for 19.8% of all divorces in 2020. There are also clear differences in divorce rates between males and females and by age, with 20% of divorced males and 45.9% of divorced females under 25 years of age.<sup>102</sup>

### **7- Marriage of minors:**

SDG Target 5.3 refers to the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and

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97 DoS. 2019. Jordan in Figures, 2019. <https://bit.ly/3A23mrG>.

98 DoS. 2018. Population and Family Health Survey, 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

99 DoS. 2020. Jordanian Women's Statistics. <https://bit.ly/3Aaby9v>.

100 Ibid.

101 Supreme Judges Department. 2020. Annual Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/3jmbox>.

102 Ibid.

forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). This is measured by the percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 24 who were married or have been married before the age of 15 and before the age of 18 (Indicator 5.3.1). In 2020, marriages with one or both spouses in the age group of 15–18 years increased to 7,964 contracts for girls and 194 contracts for boys. These also represented 11.8% of all regular and repeated marriages, a 1.2% increase compared to 2019, when the percentage of minor marriages was 10.6%.

#### **8- Divorce by redemption or compensation to the husband (Khul):**

Cases of divorce by repudiation (Khul), involving redemption or compensation of a dowry to the husband decreased by 35.8% in 2020 compared to 2019. Of the total cases dismissed, 39.6% abandoned their petitions.<sup>103</sup> Repudiation is defined as one of the forms of dissolution of a marriage contract or separation of spouses that is carried out by judicial decision, provided that the wife returns the dowry, gifts and expenses received if the dissolution of marriage is done before the wedding night, and the dowry received is returned if it is done after the first wedding night, at the request of the wife.<sup>104</sup>

#### **9- Polygamy:**

In the last five years (2016–2020), 7.5% of all marriages in Jordan were considered polygamous marriages (repeated marriage contracts). In 2020, these marriage contracts decreased by 7% compared to 2019, mainly due to the decline in marriages in general.<sup>105</sup>

#### **10- Marital status of Jordanians:**

An analysis of the marital status of Jordanian females aged 15 and over showed that 34.2% were single and 65.8% were married or had been married before. The results for males showed that 45.1% were single and 54.9% were married or had previously been married.<sup>106</sup>

#### **11- Widowhood:**

Females in Jordan are eight times as likely as males to be widowed. Widows, especially after the death of their husbands, regardless of their age or location, suffer poverty, violence, deprivation and marginalization, reflecting negatively on their lives, health, future and the future of their children, in societies where women's social standing is linked to the status and presence of their husbands. The percentage of male widowers was 1.6% compared to 8.7% of female widows.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2019. Personal Status Law No. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Supreme Judges Department. 2020. Annual Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/3jmbsox>.

<sup>106</sup> DoS. 2020. Employment and Unemployment Survey. <https://bit.ly/2WUfdKl>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Health and welfare

### 1- Health insurance:

Access to health care is easier when individuals are covered by health insurance. Health insurance is provided by several entities in Jordan, including: The Ministry of Health, Royal Medical Services, University Hospitals, UNRWA, UNHCR, non-governmental health insurance and private insurance. An individual may also have more than one type of insurance.

In general, 58% of women and 50% of men aged 15–49 have some type of health insurance,<sup>108</sup> most from the Ministry of Health or Royal Medical Services. According to nationality, Jordanian women have the highest health insurance coverage (62%), followed by Syrian women (40%) and women of other nationalities (28%), with the same pattern among men. The percentage of health insurance coverage increases the higher an individual's educational level, with only 43% of uneducated women having some type of health insurance, compared to 67% of those with an education beyond high school. Meanwhile, 28% of uneducated men have health insurance, compared to 59% of those with education beyond high school.

### 2- Life expectancy at birth:

Women in Jordan live 2.8 years longer than men. Life expectancy at birth in Jordan has increased over the past four decades by an additional 11 years, as life expectancy at birth for both sexes was 62 years in 1979 but reached 73.3 years in 2019 (75.1 years for females and 72.3 years for males).<sup>109</sup>

### 3- Chronic diseases:

According to a DoS survey, widowed and illiterate women in Jordan are those women most affected by chronic diseases, with 13% of the Kingdom's population suffering from chronic diseases and a higher percentage among females than males.<sup>110</sup> The list of chronic diseases primarily includes diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease of different types, strokes, asthma, allergies and cancers.

Hypertension was the most common among chronic diseases, at 39%, followed by diabetes at 29%, while cancer was the least prevalent overall. Women are more likely to suffer from hypertension than men, affecting 41.5% of women and 35.3% of men with chronic disease. The overall percentage of individuals affected by hypertension for all

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3uwHq5V>.

<sup>110</sup> DoS. 2010. The incidence of chronic diseases in Jordan. [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_a/main/Analasis\\_Reports/dis\\_perment\\_2010/dis\\_perment\\_2010.pdf](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/Analasis_Reports/dis_perment_2010/dis_perment_2010.pdf)

ages is about 5% of the population (about 6% for women and 4% for men), and the percentage rises significantly among individuals over 25 years of age to about 11% (12.9% for women and 9.6% for men).

Chronic disease is also more common according to certain types of marital status, as 94% of male and female widows and widowers aged 15 and over have one or more chronic diseases, although the percentage is higher among widowed women (95% among women versus 90% among men). Divorced women are also twice as likely to develop chronic diseases as divorced men (at a rate of 20% for women versus 10% for men), as are single women (2.6% versus 1.3% for men).

With regard to the relationship between education and chronic diseases, the prevalence of chronic disease was higher among the illiterate than among the educated, by up to 67%. Chronic disease is also significantly higher among illiterate women than among illiterate men, with about 77% of illiterate women suffering from chronic disease, compared to 44% of illiterate men.<sup>111</sup>

#### **4- Cancer:**

Breast cancer is the most prevalent common type of cancer among females, accounting for 39.4% of all female cancers, compared to colorectal cancer at 9.7%, thyroid cancer at 5.9%, uterine cancer at 5.4%, and non-Hodgkins lymphoma at 3.8%. Conversely, colorectal cancer was most prevalent type of cancer among males, at 14.5%, followed by lung cancer at 11.3%, bladder cancer at 10.1%, prostate cancer at 8.1% and non-Hodgkins lymphoma at 5.1%.<sup>112</sup>

Breast self-examination is an important part of the health and fitness of every adult woman, which should be carried out monthly starting at the age of 20, continuing every month throughout a woman's life. In addition, an adult woman should receive regular clinical breast examinations by a specialist. Mammograms are also an important tool for breast cancer screening. The results of the Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018 show that 17% of ever-married women aged 15–49 years had done a breast self-examination in the previous 12 months, 14% had had breast cancer exams by a health professional, and 9% had had mammograms. The percentage of women who had different types of breast screening increases with age, education and well-being.

#### **5- Human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency disease (HIV/AIDS):**

Jordanians, both male and female, have highly discriminatory attitudes towards people of both sexes infected with HIV/AIDS. At least 83% of women and 79% of men believe

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111 Ibid.

112 Ministry of Health. 2015. Annual Cancer Epidemiology Report in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/37iaGmE>.

that HIV-positive children should not be allowed to go to the same school as non-infected children, and 82% of women and 80% of men report that they tend not to buy fresh vegetables from an HIV-positive shopkeeper.

In terms of awareness, the Population and Family Health Survey confirmed that 52% of ever-married women between the ages of 15–49 and 54% of men know that condom use is a means of preventing the spread of HIV, and 64% of women and 72% of men know that limiting sexual intercourse to one faithful and non-infected partner reduces the chances of contracting the disease.<sup>113</sup>

One in four ever-married women (27%) and 40% of men know where to go for HIV testing. However, knowledge of HIV/AIDS is significantly lower among ever-married young women and men aged 15–24, with the aforementioned survey showing that 7% of young women and 8% of young men have comprehensive knowledge of the disease.<sup>114</sup>

Jordanian Ministry of Health data show that the number of cases of AIDS since its onset in 1986 until the end of 2018 amounted to 1,523 cases, with 106 cases recorded in 2018, of which 65 were among foreigners and 41 were Jordanians (33 male and 8 female).<sup>115</sup> The Ministry has a centre that specializes in providing counselling for infected people and those who interact with them.

## **6- Anemia:**

Anemia rates among women increased to 43% in 2017–2018 compared to 34% in 2012, with most cases being mild anemia. At least 36% of women are classified as having mild anemia, 6% with moderate anemia, and less than 1% with severe anemia. Women with six or more births and women using intra-uterine devices were among those with the highest levels of anemia (53% and 48%, respectively).

## **7- Suicide:**

The rate of suicide in Jordan was high in 2020 compared to the previous 10 years, if not the highest ever, reaching 169 cases, for an increase of 45.7% over 2019.<sup>116</sup> Females accounted for about 30% of suicides and 62% of suicide attempts.

The Criminal Information Department of the Public Security Directorate classified the reasons and motives for suicide and attempted suicide into 10 different categories:

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113 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Criminal Information Department, Public Security Directorate (PSD). 2020. Criminal Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/37gvPxx>.

emotional reasons, financial reasons, failure and frustration, moral reasons, family disputes, psychological diseases and problems, personal differences, humanitarian reasons, other reasons, and unknown reasons.<sup>117</sup>

### **8- Traffic deaths:**

Traffic accidents caused 461 deaths in 2020, compared to 643 deaths in 2019, a decrease of 28.3%, with female deaths accounting for 18.8% of all deaths. Pedestrians accounted for 35.5% of deaths, while drivers accounted for 28.5% and passengers for 36% (among both sexes) in 2020.<sup>118</sup>

### **9- Smoking:**

SDG Target 3/A indicates the importance of strengthening the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries. The prevalence of tobacco use is currently measured among persons aged 15 and over (Indicator 3/A/1). In Jordan, 12% of married women and 45% of married men smoke any type of tobacco, with cigarette smoking common among 8% of women and 40% of men, and hookah (water pipe) smoking among 7% of women and 11% of men.<sup>119</sup>

### **10- Possession of and trafficking in narcotic substances:**

In 2020, the percentage of females arrested for possession of narcotic substances increased to 162 charges compared to 147 in 2019 – an increase of almost 10% – and the percentage of women charged with trafficking in narcotic substances increased over the same period to 172 charges compared to 152 charges in 2019 – an increase of 13.15%, according to the Study of Crime and Recidivism published by the Ministry of Justice. However, comparing the percentage of women to men reveals that most of the charges are still against men, with 11,513 possession charges for males compared to only 162 charges for females, and 19,047 trafficking charges against males in the same year compared to 172 against women, so the vast majority of possession and trafficking of narcotic substances charges fall on males (98.6-99.2%).

### **11- Coronavirus infection cases and deaths:**

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Jordan, there were 393,154 COVID-19 infections. According to gender, 52% of these infections were among males and 48% among females. There were 4,756 deaths, 64% of which were among males and 36% among females. The elderly are among the most at-risk of dying from COVID-19, as older persons (65 years and older) accounted for 65.3% of all deaths. The lowest deaths were in the 5–14 age group.<sup>120</sup>

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117 Ibid.

118 Public Security Directorate (PSD). 2020. Annual Report of Traffic Accidents in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/3A9WUPB>.

119 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

120 Ministry of Health. 2020. Coronavirus Pandemic Statistics in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/387o7Xz>.

## 12- Births and deaths:

The number of births in Jordan decreased by 10.5% in 2020, while deaths increased by 9.4% compared to births and deaths in 2019. According to gender, the percentage of females among all live births in Jordan was 48.7%, with 85,973 female births compared to 90,584 male births, and the percentage of female deaths was 40.7%, with 13,283 female versus 19,370 male deaths.<sup>121</sup> The maternal mortality rate was 32.4 deaths per 100,000 livebirths.<sup>122</sup>

The number of births performed in Ministry of Health Hospitals in various governorates of the Kingdom in 2019 amounted to 74,564 births, of which 22,918 were caesarean births, representing 30.7% of all births.<sup>123</sup> The continued rise in caesarean sections is increasing the incidence of maternal deaths. A report by the Ministry of Health showed that out of 63 maternal deaths, 30 were to mothers who had a c-section.<sup>124</sup>

## 13- Maternal health care (antenatal, during birth and postnatal):

The majority of mothers aged 15–49 (98%), who had a live birth in the five years preceding the DHS survey received antenatal care from a skilled provider, while 79% of women had seven or more antenatal care visits. Most births (98%) of live births delivered in a health facility, 65 percent of deliveries occurred in public facilities, 33% in private facilities and less than 1% of deliveries occurred at home. Virtually all births were delivered by a skilled provider (100%). Eighty-three per cent of mothers had a postnatal check-up within two days of the birth. The median duration of breastfeeding decreased by two months compared to 2012, reaching 9.7 months in 2017–2018.<sup>125</sup>

## 14- Family planning:

SDG Target 3.7 seeks to ensure that by 2030, universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including family planning and awareness-raising services and information, are integrated into national strategies and programmes. This is measured by the adolescent birth rate per thousand women (Indicator 3.7.2).

Currently, 52% of married women use a family planning method, compared to 61% in a 2012 DHS survey.<sup>126</sup> Currently, 14.6% of married women say they have an unmet need for family planning, such as wanting to have intervals in between pregnancies (8.3%) or to limit births (6.3%) but do not use contraception at present. Modern means represented about 57% of the total demand for family planning. The unmet need for birth spacing

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121 DoS. 2020. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/2Vpuof6>.

122 Ministry of Health. 2019. Annual Maternal Mortality Report. <https://bit.ly/3BmqS3s>.

123 Ministry of Health. 2019. Annual Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/3lwsbYZ>.

124 Ministry of Health. 2019. Annual Maternal Mortality Report. <https://bit.ly/3BmqS3s>.

125 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey (2017–2018). <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

126 DoS and ICF International. 2013. Demographic and Health Survey 2012. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR282/FR282.pdf>

varies according to the age of the woman, while the unmet need to reduce childbearing increases as women age. The unmet need for family planning is also linked to education, with uneducated women recording the lowest rate (5%) compared to women with secondary or higher education (5.3% and 8.3%, respectively). This unmet need is also linked to place of residency, with women living in urban areas recording a higher level of unmet needs (14.4%) than women living in rural areas (13.1%). Knowledge of contraception is almost universal in Jordan, with nearly all currently married women (99.6%) and currently married men (99.5%) knowing at least one contraceptive method. The most common method among women was the intrauterine contraceptive device (IUD) (98.4%), followed by birth control pills (95.8%), and withdrawal (91.5%). Among men, the IUD was the best-known method (93.1%), followed by birth control pills (89.5%) and condoms (88.9%). Half (49.2%) of women users of modern contraceptives received them from the public sector and half (50.8%) from the private sector. The interval between the births of children is shorter among younger women than for older women (14.1 months for women aged 15–19, compared to 50.8 months for women aged 40–45). The interval between births after the death of a child is shorter than that for women with surviving children (34.6 months compared to 18.3 months after the death of a child). The interval between births varies slightly according to place of residence in urban and rural areas (34.1 months in urban areas and 35.4 months in rural areas). However, the interval between births for children of higher-educated women is shorter compared to other women (34.3 months compared to 29.5 months for uneducated women).<sup>127</sup>

### **15- Decision-making related to health:**

The percentage of women who make their own health-related decisions has declined. The Population and Family Health Survey showed that 25% of Jordanian married women aged 15–49 decide on their own health care, compared to 40% in the 2012 survey, while 7% of married women reported that their husbands make health-related decisions alone, compared to 11% in the 2012 survey. Another 67% reported that they make health-related decisions jointly with their husbands, compared to 49% in the 2012 survey. In contrast, the Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018 showed that 40% of married men said they make decisions about their health care alone, 56% said they make decisions in consultation with their wives, and 3% said their wives make decisions about their health.<sup>128</sup>

## **3. Disability**

Of every nine people aged 5 years and over in Jordan, there is an individual with a disability (difficulty) at a percentage of 11.1%, with the rate higher among males than females (11.5% versus 10.6%, respectively). Out of all Jordanians who are experiencing such physical difficulties, 46.6% are women aged 5 and over; compared to 42.8% of non-Jordanian women with physical difficulties. According to the type of bodily function

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018, <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

difficulties experienced by Jordanian women, difficulties with vision are the most common, followed by difficulties with walking or climbing stairs, difficulties with hearing, difficulties remembering or concentrating, difficulties with personal care, and difficulties in communicating with others.<sup>129</sup>

Among Jordanian women who have difficulties with body function, 68% had health insurance compared to 32% who were not insured.<sup>130</sup>

## 4. Education

SDG Target 4.2 seeks to ensure, by 2030, that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and basic education, as measured by the participation rate in structured regular education (one year before the official entry age for basic education), by gender (Indicator 4.2.2).

### 1- Educational levels for Jordanian Population :

A high proportion of Jordanians aged 15 and over are literate (94.9%), while the illiteracy rate is 5.1%, although the latter is higher among women (7.3%) than among men (3%). A closer look at the educational levels of Jordanians shows that more than half (53.8%) have lower than secondary-level education (49.1% of females and 58.5% of males); 14.8% hold secondary education (15.8% of females and 13.8% of males); 7.6% hold an intermediate diploma (9.2% of females and 6.1% of males), and 18.6% hold a Bachelors' degree (18.7% of females and 18.6% of males).<sup>131</sup>

### 2- Nurseries and early childhood education:

Jordan has 1.3 million children aged between 3 months and 59 months (nursery and preschool age). There are currently 1,435 registered nurseries with 43,050 children and girls enrolled.<sup>132</sup> When it comes to enrolment in early childhood education programmes, only 13% of small children (boys and girls) aged 36–59 months were enrolled in 2017–2018 in Jordan.<sup>133</sup>

Increasing such enrolment – which fell sharply to 13% in 2018 compared to 22% in 2012)<sup>134</sup> – will contribute significantly to increasing the economic participation of married women, and to improving school readiness. The educational level of mothers directly affects children's enrolment in regular education programmes, with results showing

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129 DoS. 2015. General Population and Housing Census. <https://bit.ly/37ePgeC>.

130 Ibid.

131 DoS. 2019. Jordan in Figures. <https://bit.ly/3A23mrG>.

132 Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). 2019. Annual Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/3lmTm8p>.

133 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

134 Ibid; DoS & ICF International. 2013. Demographic and Health Survey 2012. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR282/FR282.pdf>

that 23% of mothers with high than secondary education have their children enrolled in these programmes, compared to 4–7% of the children of mothers with lower levels of education.<sup>135</sup>

### **3- Primary and secondary education:**

SDG Target 4.1 seeks to ensure that all girls and boys enjoy free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to appropriate and effective educational outcomes. This is measured by the percentage of children and young people, by gender, who, at the end of the first phase of secondary education achieve at least a minimum level of proficiency in reading and mathematics. Meanwhile, SDG Target 8.6 seeks to achieve a significant reduction in the percentage of young people not enrolled in education, employment or training by 2030. This is measured by the percentage of young people (aged 15–24) not enrolled in education, employment or training.

Youth (defined as being 15–34 years old) make up one third of Jordan's population, the highest percentage Jordan has ever seen, providing a unique opportunity for social and economic development. However, youth in Jordan face challenges on different fronts. Many young Jordanians do not have access to good employment opportunities, and about 29% of young people in 2015 were not enrolled in education, employment or training, much to the detriment of urban, less educated and young females. The rate of young women not attending education, work or training is three times higher than that of young men (43.8% versus 14.5%).<sup>136</sup>

There were 2.15 million students enrolled in primary and secondary school in the academic year 2019–2020, of which females accounted for 49.5%.

### **4- School truancy and re-enrolment:**

During the academic year 2019/2020, 7,284 students dropped out of schools, with females accounting for 47.2% and males for 52.8% of the total, with an overall dropout rate of 0.41% of all students. Most dropouts were in eighth through tenth grade. During the same academic year, 9,496 students (30% female and 70% male) were re-enrolled. The re-enrolment rate was 0.54% of all students.<sup>137</sup>

### **5- University education:**

The total number of students enrolled in Jordanian universities at the Bachelors' level for the academic year 2019/2020 amounted to 299,000 students, 55.6% of whom were

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135 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

136 Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Planning and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2018. Study of the Presentation of Youth Welfare Policies in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/37wotq5>.

137 Ministry of Education. Statistical Report for the Academic Year 2019–2020. <https://bit.ly/2WKtybT>.

female.<sup>138</sup> However, female enrolment is still highly correlated with certain sectors of the labour market. For example, of all female students enrolled, 22% are in health-related studies, 18% in humanities; 12% in commerce, business and administration; and 11% in education sciences and teacher preparation. Thus, 63% of female students enrolled in Jordanian universities are in just four disciplines.

The number of staff and faculty for the academic year 2019/2020 in various Jordanian public, private and regional universities, as well as university colleges, amounted to 11,394, and female representation among academic staff reached 27.9%.<sup>139</sup>

### **6- Vocational training:**

The number of graduates of the vocational training institution in Jordan in 2019 was 11,815 trainees, of whom 40% were female. Females made up 25.5% of regular trainees (who are still studying but haven't graduated) and 37.6% of the newly enrolled trainees.<sup>140</sup>

### **7- Information and communications technology (ICT):**

SDG Target 17.8. seeks the full operationalization by 2017 of the technology bank and the Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity-Building Mechanism for Least Developed Countries, as well as the promotion of the use of enabling technologies, in particular information and communication technologies. This is measured by the percentage of individuals using the Internet (Indicator 17.8.1).

SDG Target 5.B also refers to promoting the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women. This is measured by the percentage of individuals who own a mobile phone, by gender.

The percentage of individuals aged 5 and over in Jordan who use the Internet is about 65%, with males accounting for 53% and females for 47% of users. Among these Internet users, 61% of individuals use smartphones, 33% use computers and 3.7% use tablets.<sup>141</sup>

SDG Target 4.4 seeks by 2030 to significantly increase the number of young people and adults with the appropriate skills, including technical and vocational skills, needed to find work, land decent jobs and engage in entrepreneurship. This is measured by the percentage of young people and adults with ICT skills, by skills type. Females constituted about 33% of workers in the ICT sector, and males constituted 67% in the same sector.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> DoS. 2020. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/2Vpuof6>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Vocational Training Foundation. 2019. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/3fqVtnK>.

<sup>141</sup> Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Department of Statistics. 2017. Survey of Usage and Prevalence of Communication and Information Technology in Homes. <https://bit.ly/37eCeJG>.

<sup>142</sup> Information and Communications Technology Association in Jordan (int@j). 2018. Jordan ICT & ITES Sector Statistics <https://bit.ly/3CbiepD>.

## 5. Economic participation

SDG Goal 8 seeks to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.<sup>143</sup> It includes several gender-specific targets and indicators, including 8.5 “to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value, by 2030.” This is measured by the unemployment rate (Indicator 8.5.2) and the average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities (Indicator 8.5.1).

SDG Target 8.8. seeks to “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.” This is measured by fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status (Indicator 8.8.1), and the level of national compliance with labour rights on ILO sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status (Indicator 8.8.2).

SDG Target 8.10. refers to strengthening the capacity of domestic financial institutions to promote and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all. This is measured by (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults (8.10.1 ) and the percentage of adults (aged 15 years and older) who have a bank account or account in another financial institution or a mobile financial service-provider (Indicator 8.10.2).

Jordan has moved up on its score for the economic participation axis of the Gender Gap Index, ranking 133<sup>rd</sup> in 2021, compared to 145<sup>th</sup> in 2020, a jump of 12 spots.<sup>144</sup>

Jordan has also ratified two ILO Conventions on gender, namely: Convention No. 100 on Equal Pay (of 1951), ratified by Jordan in 1966; and Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Professions (of 1958), ratified by Jordan in 1963. However, Jordan has not ratified: Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities (of 1981), Convention No. 175 on Part-Time Work (of 1994), Convention No. 177 on Work at Home (of 1996), Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (of 2000), Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (of 2011) and Convention No. 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (of 2019).<sup>145</sup>

### 1- Employment and unemployment:

The unemployment rate for Jordanians in the first quarter of 2021 fell by 4.3 percentage points among women, to reach 28.5%, compared to the fourth quarter of 2020, when the

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143 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. N.D. SDGs <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>.

144 World Economic Forum. 2021. Gender Gap Report 2021. <https://bit.ly/2TU8HC7>.

145 ILO. N.D. “Jordan” page on the ILO website <https://bit.ly/3imHlsj>.

rate was 32.8% for women. Meanwhile, the overall average unemployment rate increased (reaching a 25% average for both sexes in 2021, compared to 24.7% in 2020), and the unemployment rate increased for men (reaching 24.2% in the first quarter of 2021, up from 22.6% in the fourth quarter of 2020). In the first quarter of 2021, the percentage of unemployed women with a Bachelors' degree was 79.6%, compared to 25.1% of men who were unemployed with a Bachelors' degree.<sup>146</sup> Unemployment rates among youth were high, reaching 61.5% for the 15–19 age group and 45.7% for the 20–24 age group.<sup>147</sup>

The economic participation rate among women increased slightly, reaching 14% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to 13.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020, for an improvement of 0.3 percentage points.<sup>148</sup>

In terms of the impact of the presence of children on women's work, it has been shown that the more children there are, the lower women's economic participation will be: about 17.8% of childless women are employed and the percentage drops to 7.2% for women with five or more children. Educational level has a direct impact on the economic participation of married women. The DHS survey for 2017–2018 showed that 27.6% of married working women hold a degree beyond a high school diploma, 5.9% hold a high school diploma, 4.2% have a preparatory education level, 8.2% have a basic education level, and 12.3% of married working women are illiterate.<sup>149</sup>

## **2- Job creation:**

Net jobs created in 2019 amounted to 42,036 jobs – an increase of 4% compared to net jobs created in 2018, 79.6% of which were jobs for Jordanians.<sup>150</sup> Net employment created for women in 2019 accounted for 20.6% of all opportunities. Most new jobs were in the private sector at 90.9%, while the public sector provided 5.8%.<sup>151</sup>

There are many reasons why women leave their jobs, most of which relate to decent work standards and least to marriage, retirement, social and health reasons. Accordingly, 51.7% of women left their jobs for reasons related to working conditions, 12.1% left work for personal reasons, 6.6% left work due to retirement, 6% left work due to marriage, 3.2% left work for reasons related to incentives, and the remaining percentages were divided between health, economic and other reasons.<sup>152</sup> Age, marital status, number of children,

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146 DoS. 2021. Employment and Unemployment Survey, First Quarter. <https://bit.ly/3xieaQR>.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3imirbc>.

151 DoS. 2019. New Employment Opportunities (2018–2019). <https://bit.ly/3CihLLI>.

152 DoS. 2019. Employment and Unemployment Survey. <https://bit.ly/3xieaQR>.

wealth, place of residence, educational level and nationality have direct implications for women in terms of their economic participation. Among ever-married women aged 15–19, 99% have never worked, compared to 1% who are currently working; while the highest percentage of currently employed women is in the 30–34 age group (19.4%). This then declines to 10% in the 45–49 age group. Currently, 12.8% of currently married women are employed, compared to 26.5% of “divorced, separated and widowed” women.

According to age groups, there is a big difference between female and male elderly Jordanians who remain in the labour market. The economic participation rate for males aged 60+ is 10.7% while it did not exceed 1% among women in the same age group, which clearly limits their economic participation, coupled with the fact that most of women are economically inactive.<sup>153</sup>

### **3- Informal work:**

According to a 2015 ILO study,<sup>154</sup> 41% of Jordanian women work in the informal sector (compared to 53% of men); 8% of women work from home (compared to 1% of men); and 74% of women work in an office (compared to 48% for men), and a greater percentage of women than men work in a neighbourhood close to their homes. Their work is concentrated in education, health and social work, and less frequently in trade and construction. A greater percentage of women than men are professionals in elementary occupations, with a lower percentage working as craftswomen. In addition, 94% of them are paid workers.

### **4- Child labour:**

SDG Target 8.7 seeks immediate measures to eliminate forced labour, end modern-day slavery and human trafficking, ensure the prohibition and eradication of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and end all forms of child labour by 2025. This is measured by the percentage and number of children between the ages of 5 and 17 who are involved in the child labour market, by gender and age (Indicator 8.7.1).

In Jordan, a 2016 national survey indicated that there were 75,982 male and female children between the ages of 5–17 who were working, of whom 8,868 were girls, or 11.7%. This figure is estimated to be high for a variety of reasons, including economic conditions and their implications for families. According to nationality, there were 60,787 children of Jordanian nationality, 11,098 of Syrian nationality and 4,096 of other nationalities. The survey indicated that 44,917 child labourers (including 2,393 girls), are employed in

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> ILO and Fafo Foundation. 2015. Study on the Effects of the Influx of Syrian Refugees into the Jordanian Labour Market. May. <https://bit.ly/3fMUzIZ>.

hazardous work, which constitutes 59.1% of all child labour. The survey further identified the age groups of girls working in hazardous work, which include: 586 girls aged 5–11, 687 girls aged 12–14 and 1,120 girls aged 15–17.<sup>155</sup>

### **5- The gender pay gap:**

SDG Target 8.5 seek to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, as well as youth and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030. This is measured by the average hourly earnings of working women and men, by gender, age, occupation and persons with disabilities (Indicator 8.5.1).

The average monthly wage for public and private sector workers in Jordan is JOD 540 (USD 761) for males and JOD 484 (USD 683) for females, with a pay gap in favour of males of JOD 56. The average monthly working hours were 208 hours for males and 188 hours for females.<sup>156</sup> The average monthly wage for public sector workers is higher than the average monthly wage for private sector workers. For example, the average in the public sector is JOD 649 for males versus JOD 555 for females, while the average in the private sector is JOD 495 JD for males versus JOD 422 for females. Accordingly, the wage gap in the public sector is 14.5% and in the private sector 14.7% (i.e., for every 100 dinars earned by men, women receive 85.5 and 85.3 dinars, respectively). The average monthly working hours in the public sector were 169 hours for males and 166 hours for females, while in the private sector they were 224 hours for males and 207 hours for females. The pay gap between male and female public sector workers varies according to the main occupational groups, with lawmakers and senior management employees accounting for 34.1% (JOD 1,578 for males versus JOD 1,040 for females). In the private sector, the wage gap varies according to major occupational groups as well, and in for lawmakers and senior management staff it is 25.8% (for every 100 dinars earned by men, women receive 74.2 dinars).<sup>157</sup>

### **6- Leadership and asset ownership:**

Women face similar, if not greater, challenges in entrepreneurship. Women's cooperative societies in Jordan account for only 6.5% of all cooperatives.<sup>158</sup> Although the percentage of female stockholders on the Amman Stock Exchange is 44% of all individual investors, the value of these shares is only 24% of the total monetary value of all shares, and women's representation on corporate boards is less than 22%.<sup>159</sup> Women accounted for 21% of all

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155 ILO, Ministry of Labour, DoS, Centre for Strategic Studies. 2016. National Child Labour Survey. <https://bit.ly/3ynuhhm>.

156 DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3imi1bc>.

157 Ibid.

158 DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3imi1bc>.

159 Jordan Securities Commission. 2020. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/3frTUWA>.

credit-card-holders, for 19% of all borrowers, and for 27% of all bank depositors, although only 16% of women in Jordan have bank accounts.<sup>160</sup> Women's ownership of immovable property declined, with 17% owning land and 24% owning apartments,<sup>161</sup> resulting in poor access to resources, including agricultural loans and poor social protection, as only 28% of all participants in social security are women.<sup>162</sup>

### **7- Employers and loans:**

The latest data show that 5% of employed males and 1% of employed females are employers, and that 10.2% of males and 2.9% of females are self-employed.<sup>163</sup>

Micro-loans were distributed between males and females, with females obtaining 1,297 loans, accounting for 39.7% of all loans (providing 2,151 job opportunities). Female loans amounted to JOD 10.2 million and 36.3% of the total volume of financing volume.<sup>164</sup> Women also accounted for 69% of active clients of micro-finance institutions.<sup>165</sup>

### **8- Unpaid work:**

SDG Target 5.4 aims to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work by providing public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and promoting shared responsibility within the family and household, as appropriate at the national level. This is measured by the percentage of time allocated to unpaid domestic and care work, by gender, age and location (Indicator 5.4.1).

Jordan has not conducted a national time-use survey, nor does it account for the care and domestic work that women often do, and which contributes to raising the gross national product. This work is also often done at the expense of paid work.

A 2020 UN Women and Economic Research Forum study on the care economy found that in 2016, women spent 18.8 hours on unpaid care work per week on average while men spent only 1.1 hours per week; but employed women did even more, spending an average of 57.1 hours per week on unpaid and paid work (19.8 and 37.3 hours, respectively), compared to 43.5 total hours spent by employed men (1.5 and 42 hours, respectively).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Central Bank of Jordan. 2019. Financial Stability Report. <https://bit.ly/2VwqZK9>.

<sup>161</sup> DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3imi1bc>.

<sup>162</sup> Social Security Corporation (SSC). 2019. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/3ChCVjy>.

<sup>163</sup> DoS. 2019. Statistical Yearbook. <https://bit.ly/3imi1bc>.

<sup>164</sup> Development and Employment Fund. 2018. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/2VoxwXx>.

<sup>165</sup> Jordan Microfinance Tanmeya Network. 2020. Third Quarter 2020 Performance Report. <https://bit.ly/3xokTsz>.

<sup>166</sup> Jordanian Women in Public and Political Life in 100 Years, 2021, Association of the Jordanian Women's Solidarity Institute <https://bit.ly/2VldCgo>

## 9- Social security:

Females accounted for 29% of all social security recipients in 2019, slightly higher than the percentage in 2018 (28.5%), and (32%) of all participants were voluntary subscribers. In 2019, 10,136 participants benefited from maternity insurance, and the majority of women entitled to maternity leave allowances worked in the education sector (39.4%). The number of beneficiaries of one-time compensation (for quitting a job) increased significantly, by 29.5% compared to 2018; more than half of whom were non-Jordanians 51.5%, 37.1% of whom were females; and 29.7% of all one-off beneficiaries were due to “termination of service due to marriage, widowhood or divorce”, of which more than 99.9% were Jordanians.<sup>167</sup>

## 10- Poverty:

SDG Target 1.2 seeks, by 2030, to reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. This is measured by the proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age (Indicator no. 1.2.1) and Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions (Indicator no. 1.2.2).

The poverty rate in Jordan reached 15.7% of individuals, while the poverty gap hit 3.5% and the intensity of poverty was 1.2%. The “poverty gap” means the size of the overall monetary gap needed to raise the spending of the poor to the poverty line (i.e., to become non-poor). “Poverty intensity” is a relative measure that gives a picture of the extent of poverty inequality among the poor themselves. The higher the value of the index, the greater the inequality.<sup>168</sup> In 2020, the percentage of female beneficiaries of monthly aid from the National Aid Fund was 61%, while the percentage of males was 39%.<sup>169</sup>

## 6. Political participation

SDG Target 5.5 seeks to ensure the full and effective participation and equal opportunities of women and men in leadership positions at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. This is measured by the number of seats held by women in national parliaments (Indicator 5.5.1.A), and of seats held by women in local governments (Indicator 5.5.1.B).

Jordanian women gained the right to vote and run for office in 1974, but parliamentary life was frozen on 23 November 1974 in response to the resolution of the Arab Summit after the dissolution of the ninth House of Representatives. They were not given the opportunity to participate effectively until 1984 in supplementary elections for a number

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<sup>167</sup> SSC. 2019. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/3ChCVjy>.

<sup>168</sup> DoS. 2019. Book: Jordan in Figures. <https://bit.ly/3A23mrG>.

<sup>169</sup> MoSD. 2020. Statistics sent to the Economic and Social Council.

of seats, due to the death of their holders. Their participation was at that time as voters, because no woman ran for any of the seats at the time.

### **1- The Senate:**

The percentage of women in the twenty-eighth Jordanian Senate Session for 2020 reached 10.8%, compared to 15.4% in the twenty-seventh session. The twenty-sixth session, which was formed in 2013, saw the formation of the first Women's Committee, which continues to this day. Laila Sharaf was the first woman to be appointed to the Senate, in 1989, in the sixteenth session, while a total of 40 women have been appointed to the Senate since its establishment.<sup>170</sup>

### **2- House of Representatives:**

During the period from 1974–2020, women won only 80 of 910 seats in the Jordanian House of Representatives' eleventh to nineteenth sessions, for an overall percentage of 8.8% representation. Of these, 11 seats (13.7% of women's seats) were contested and 69 seats (86.3% of women's seats) were filled according to the women's quota system. While the number of women candidates in the 1993 parliamentary elections declined to 3 out of 534 candidates (0.56%), one of them won (Toujan Faisal), becoming the first Jordanian woman to enter the House of Representatives, for a total representation of 1.25%, or 1 of 80 seats. Under the Electoral Law (No. 34 of 2001), which was amended in 2003, 6 out of 110 seats, or 5.5%, were allocated to women. The elections for the fifteenth parliament in 2007 represented a qualitative leap for Jordanian women in terms of the number of women candidates, which amounted to 22.5%, with 199 of the 885 women candidates nominated. However, this increase did not lead to an increase in the number of women winning seats, and women's representation in the House increased only marginally, to 6.36%, with only one candidate getting elected directly.<sup>171</sup>

In 2010, the Electoral Law for the House of Representatives was passed, which retained the one-vote system and increased the number of parliamentary seats from 110 to 120 seats and increased the seats allocated under the women's quota from 6 to 12 seats. Accordingly, the elections for the sixteenth House of Representatives were held in 2010, with 134 women getting nominated out of 763 women candidates (17.6% of the candidates nominated), but again, only one candidate was able to win competitively. In 2012, the number of seats allocated to the women's quota increased again, from 12 to 15, under amendments to the Electoral Law of the House of Representatives. Moreover, 27 seats have been created for national lists and 108 for local constituencies, bringing the total number of seats in the House of Representatives to 150.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Jordanian Women's Solidarity Institute. 2021. AL-Mara'a AL-Uredeneyya Fi AL-Hayat AL-A'ammuh Wa ALSeyaseyyah Khilal Mi'ut A'am (Jordanian Women in Public and Political Life in 100 Years). <https://bit.ly/2VldCgo>.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

The number of candidates applying to the Independent Electoral Commission for the elections to the seventeenth House of Representatives, which took place on 23 January 2013, was about 1,528, including 208 women candidates. The total number of applications to local constituencies was 698, of which 121 were women, and the number of lists in the general constituency was 61, which included 829 candidates, of whom 88 were women. In the end, 18 women, including one woman on the local lists and two women who won through the open competition (outside the quota system).

The Electoral Law of the House of Representatives (No. 6 of 2016) subsequently reduced the number of seats in the House to 130, of which 15 remained allocated to women under the quota – for 11.5% of the total seats. The elections for the eighteenth House of Representatives were held on 20 September 2016, with 1,252 male candidates and 257 female candidates. Five women managed to win by competition. However, the results of the subsequent 2020 parliamentary elections for the nineteenth session indicate that, for the first time since the fifteenth session in 2007, women did not win any seats competitively. Only 15 women won seats, all according to the quota system, while no women candidates succeeded in reaching the Parliament directly by competition. However, the death of a member of the House of Representatives led to the entry of a woman who had the second-highest number of votes after him in his district, raising the percentage of women's representation in the House to 12.3%.<sup>173</sup>

### **3- Municipal councils:**

In 1995, on the initiative of Her Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal, Chair of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), the Cabinet approved the appointment of 99 women as members of municipal and local councils throughout the Kingdom. This encouraged women to stand in the municipal elections that took place in the same year, where 15 women were nominated, 10 of whom won, including the first female mayor, Iman Fatemat, president of the Municipality of Al-Wahhadneh.<sup>174</sup>

In 1999, 43 women ran in the municipal elections, of whom eight won and 25 were appointed, and in 2003 the municipalities were merged (from 328 to a total of 99) and elections were held, resulting in 46 women nominated, of whom five won election and 98 were appointed to ensure that there was at least one woman in each municipality.

In 2007, after the Municipal Elections Law was amended to ensure that women would make up about 20% of the total seats in municipal councils as a women's quota, 355 women ran, 226 of whom won (23 competitively). In addition, six women ran for the presidency of municipalities, only one of whom won.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

Meanwhile, the results of the 2017 municipal elections showed that women won 27.8% of the seats (20% through the quota and 7.8% competitively) and no woman won municipal presidencies.<sup>175</sup>

#### **4- Governorate Councils:**

In the first experiment of its kind, the 2017 Governorate Council Elections were held under the Decentralization Law (No. 49 of 2015). Of the 117 women candidates, four women won by direct competition, and 32 through the women's quota, for a total of 36 (more than 10% of the 299 seats). The results show that women won an additional 17 seats by appointment by the Cabinet (adding an additional 5%), bringing the total number of women elected to the Governorate Council to 53 of the 376 seats in the Governorate Councils – more than 15%.<sup>176</sup>

#### **5- The Cabinet (Council of Ministers):**

In 1979, Inam Al-Mufti was appointed the first Jordanian Minister, and from that date until 2020, there have been a total of 34 Jordanian women ministers holding various portfolios, most of which were service ministries. The highest female representation was seven female ministers in Omar Al-Razzaz's Government in 2018 (25% of the total 28 Cabinet ministers). There were only two women ministers in the Government of Bishr Al-Khasawneh after the second reshuffle in March 2021 (7%).<sup>177</sup> Jordan has seen a significant decline in women's ministerial representation, falling from a rank of 95<sup>th</sup> globally in 2019 to a ranking of 158<sup>th</sup> by 2021.<sup>178</sup>

#### **6- Political parties:**

SDG Target 16.7 refers to ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. This is measured by the percentage of jobs (by age, gender, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service and judiciary) as compared to levels of distribution at the national level (Indicator 16.7.1); and by the 'Proportion of the population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group' (Indicator 16.7.2)

Following the promulgation of the Political Parties Law (No. 39 of 2015), according to data from the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the number of licensed political

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175 DoS. 2018. Gender Indicators. <https://bit.ly/3yq3y3t>.

176 The Jordanian Women Solidarity Institute. 2021. AL-Mara'a AL-Uredeneyya Fi AL-Hayat AL-A'ammuh Wa ALSeyaseyyah Khilal Mi'ut A'am (Jordanian Women in Public and Political Life in 100 Years). <https://bit.ly/2VldCgo>.

177 Ibid.

178 The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women. 2019. Women in Politics: 2019. <https://bit.ly/3jltoAX> ; IPU and UN Women. 2021. Women in Politics: 2021. <https://bit.ly/3phir1B>.

parties in Jordan was 49,<sup>179</sup> but Jordanian women's participation in political parties was low (35.3% of all membership), especially at the leadership level, with three women holding the position of Secretary-General (6.1%).<sup>180</sup>

### **7- Professional syndicates:**

The latest figures on women working in the health sector<sup>181</sup> show that women make up 61.4% of dentists, but their representation in the union council was only 18.2%, and the thirty-second union council 2016–2019 included only two members. Although women make up the largest percentage of the Nurses' Union members (at 79.3%), their representation in the Union Council for the years 2018–2021 was only 2 of the 11 seats (18.2%), noting that those two seats are reserved for the midwife category, whose members are restricted to women only. Two women won membership of the Medical Council for the thirty-third session (2019–2022), out of 12 members, in addition to the Director's position, bringing the percentage of women's representation to 15.4%, while there were no women in the previous Union Council. By the end of 2019, 20.2% of the registered doctors in the union were women. Two women were elected to the Board of the Pharmacists' Union at its thirtieth session (2017–2020), out of 11 members, including the Director, and the representation of women on the board of the Pharmacists' Union decreased to 18.1%, compared to the previous board, which had 27.2% with three women members. Pharmacists' Union records for 2017 indicate that 60.9% of women are registered in the Union. One woman won a seat on the board of the Jordanian Veterinary Doctors' Union, which consists of the Director and eight members of the Union Council in its 2017–2020 session, representing women for the first time since 1972. This brings the percentage of women on the council to 11.1%.<sup>182</sup>

Two women were elected to the Jordan Press Association Council in its 2017–2020 session, out of 11 members, including the Director and his/her deputy. For the first time in its history, women's representation on the Press Association Council rose to 18%, compared to 9% on the previous council. Meanwhile, 26% of the members of the General Committee of the journalists' union are women.

As of the end of 2018, 51.3% of agronomists affiliated with the union were women, and the representation of women in its 2018–2021 Union Council, consisted of nine members (22.2%). As of the end of 2019, 26.7% of engineers were women but there was no female representative on the Engineers' Union Council 2018–2021.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> See List of Licensed Parties in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/3bCUPRx>.

<sup>180</sup> DoS. 2018. Gender Indicators. <https://bit.ly/3yq3y3t>.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> The Jordanian Women Solidarity Institute. 2021. AL-Mara'a AL-Uredeneyya Fi AL-Hayat AL-A'ammuh Wa ALSeyaseyyah Khilal Mi'ut A'am (Jordanian Women in Public and Political Life in 100 Years). <https://bit.ly/2VldCgo>.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

There were 13,480 lawyers registered in the Lawyers' Union by the end of 2019, with women accounting for 27.3%. Out of 11 members, including the Director, women were unable to win membership at the council's forty-third session (2017–2019), leaving the Bar Association's Council without any female representation for two consecutive sessions.

The current Teacher's Union Council (2019) also has no female representation, although two-thirds of primary and secondary teachers, and primary and secondary school principals are female.<sup>184</sup>

### **8- Judges:**

As of the end of 2019, the total number of judges in Jordan stood at 1,022, with 25% being female. The report of the Judicial Council for 2019 showed that among the 11 members of the Judicial Council, headed by the president of the Court of Cassation, only one member was female judge, for a 9% representation of women on the Council. The general secretariat of the Council consists of six judges, including three female judges, for 50% female representation.<sup>185</sup>

The Court of Cassation has no female representation, while the Technical Office of the Court has 36% female representation, and women make up 6% of all prosecution judges. The High Criminal Court also has no female judges. There is one female judge in the Administrative Court, but no female representation on the Supreme Administrative Court or the Administrative Public Prosecutor's Office.<sup>186</sup> There is one female judge in the Judicial Inspectorate; one female judge presides over the Judicial Institute; one female judge sits on the Constitutional Court and there is one female judge in the ecclesiastical judiciary; however, there are no female judges on the Sharia Judiciary.

### **9- Women in senior management in the public sector:**

SDG Target 5.5 seeks to ensure the full and effective participation and equal opportunities of women and men in leadership positions at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. This is measured by the percentage of women in managerial positions (Indicator 5.5.2).

Women accounted for 48% of public sector employees by the end of 2020, while women in decision-making positions accounted for 48%. According to Jordan's occupational group categories, within the 'Senior category', women make up 9%; among the next category, women make up 50% of staff in the first category (leadership and supervisory roles and setting policies and plans), 61% in the second (administrative, education, accounting,

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Jordan Judicial Council. 2019. Annual Report. <https://bit.ly/2NYqKDz>.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

technical or similar executive work), and 23% of the third category (mainly craft, auxiliary services and other professional jobs).<sup>187</sup>

#### **10- Chambers of Industry and Commerce:**

There is one woman on the Board of Directors of the nine-member Amman Chamber of Industry, one on the Board of Directors of the nine-member Irbid Chamber of Industry, and one on the Board of Directors of the nine-member Zarqa Chamber of Industry (meaning 11.1% women's representation on all three boards). There were nonetheless no female representatives of the industrial sectors and the 2019 boards and representatives of the commercial sectors of 16 chambers of commerce were also devoid of any female representation.<sup>188</sup>

#### **11- The private sector:**

A study conducted at the end of 2015 showed that women hold 21% of the top executive positions in Public Joint Stock Companies, and there are differences in the percentage of female representation on boards depending on economic sectors.<sup>189</sup> The study showed that the highest female representation on the boards of the classified companies was in the health services sector, at 10.7%, while the lowest female representation was 4% in financial services sector companies, and there was no female representation on the boards of the engineering, communications and technology sectors.<sup>190</sup>

#### **12- Banking sector:**

As of the end of 2017, excluding the Investment Bank, women accounted for 34.6% of bank employees operating in Jordan. Women's representation in the banking sector in Jordan is one of the highest among Jordanian work sectors.<sup>191</sup>

#### **13- Military and security sector:**

A Gender Office was established in the Public Security Directorate (PSD) in 2020, as well as the position of Gender Adviser, both of which are subordinate to the Director of the PSD. The role of the Gender Office is to: integrate and institutionalize a gender perspective; support the development of gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes; oversee the implementation of the PSD's Annual Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming; maintain positive working relationships with a wide network of national

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<sup>187</sup> Civil Service Bureau letter No. 4/95, dated 10 January 2021, addressed to the Chair of the Higher Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women.

<sup>188</sup> Independent Electoral Commission. 2019. Chambers of Industry Elections. <https://bit.ly/3uvGlpF>.

<sup>189</sup> Bayt AL-Hawkamah AL-Urduni Liltadreeb (Jordan Governance Training House). 2015. Study: The Impact of Women's Representation on the Economic Performance of Companies' Boards of Directors in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/3qTYHEg>.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Banks Association of Jordan. 2017. Annual Report. <http://bit.ly/31snSQw>.

partners (government sector institutions, security and military sector institutions, the JNCW, local community organizations, etc.) with regard to gender mainstreaming; prepare international and national reports reflecting the extent to which the PSD has implemented gender mainstreaming; monitor and analyse gender-related developments at the national and international levels; spread awareness about the concept of gender and UN Security Council resolution 1325 within the PSD and at all levels; assist in monitoring and evaluating the progress made in policies, programmes and budget; and develop the tools and methodologies necessary to integrate a gender perspective.

The Gender Office's achievements thus far include: holding five workshops for leaders and managers in the capital, south and north regions, with 65 participants; holding specialized courses on gender for 234 female participants and 250 male participants; giving lectures to 223 female participants and 2,440 male participants; and offering specialized English courses (considered a prerequisite for passing the SAAT examination), in cooperation with UN Women Jordan at an accredited external centre, for 45 male and 171 female participants. The Gender Office also offered four-wheel drive courses especially for women (as this is considered one of the basic requirements to participate in peacekeeping missions); and prepared a comprehensive personal guide for female participants in international peacekeeping forces to be adopted as a reference for them during participation in such missions, in partnership with the United Nations in Jordan. The Office equally participated in preparing a project proposal for the construction of a training centre for the women's component of the Elsie Initiative Fund (created by the United Nations and the Government of Canada in 2019 to achieved uniformed gender parity), to specialize in training for peacekeeping missions, as well as in capacity-building, rehabilitation and training for the 28 women who have participated in peacekeeping missions, 14 of whom were sent within the Formed Police Units to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (which is a nucleus for women's participation in this field), as well as holding specialized counselling sessions on troop participation in peacekeeping missions, for 15 female beneficiaries. The Office also took part in PSD follow-up and all necessary procedures to sign a memorandum of understanding to reduce obstacles that limit the participation of women in peacekeeping forces, which was signed with the JNCW and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance in September 2020. The memorandum was extended in February 2021, and work is now underway, including to contribute to implementing the PSD's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for 2021–2024 (a first for any security sector in the Middle East). In partnership with UN Women Jordan, the agreement seeks to support a number of different PSD members to relieve tension and support them psychologically, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, with support and psychological counselling sessions provided to 25 male and 48 female participants. A Handbook entitled "How to deal with cases of gender-based violence during the outbreak of the emerging pandemic" for Family and Juveniles Protection Department staff on how to deal with cases of gender-based violence.

#### **14- The diplomatic corps and international fora:**

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs data, as of March 2018, women constituted 6.35% of Jordanian ambassadors, 10% of ministers plenipotentiary, 6.5% of advisers, 20.6% of first secretaries, 41.2% of second secretaries, 30% of third secretaries, and 18.8% of all attachés. Women in the diplomatic service at all levels make up 20.1% and 10.2% of all ambassadors.<sup>192</sup>

### **7. Gender-based violence**

SDG Target 5.2 seeks the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres. This is measured by the percentage of married women and girls aged 15 and over who have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence from a current or former partner during the previous 12 months, depending on the form of violence and age (Indicator 5.2.1) and Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence (Indicator 5.2.2)

The Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018 confirmed that 25.9% of wives aged 15–49 had experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from their husbands, compared to 1.4% of husbands aged 15–59 who experienced physical violence by their wives.<sup>193</sup>

#### **1- Culture of silence:**

Demographic and Health Survey 2017–2018 revealed that 67% of married Jordanian women aged 15–49 who had experienced one or more forms of violence did not seek or ask for help or tell anyone about their exposure to violence.<sup>194</sup> The survey covered two types of violence experienced by married or previously married women – namely, physical violence and sexual violence. In terms of physical violence, 17.4% of married women reported seeking help, 13.6% said that they had never sought help but told someone, and 69% said that they had never sought help or told anyone. When it comes to sexual violence, 7.8% of married women who had previously experienced sexual violence reported seeking help, 11.8% said that they had never sought but had told someone, and 80.4% said that they had not told anyone or asked for help.<sup>195</sup> The results were different when married women experienced both physical and sexual violence, with 29.6% reporting that they sought help, 15.2% reporting that they did not seek help but told someone, and 55.2% reporting that they had never sought help or told anyone about the violence.

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192 DoS. 2018. Gender Indicator. <https://bit.ly/3yq3y3t>.

193 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

194 Ibid.

195 Ibid.

A culture of silence is prevalent, particularly among certain age groups, as 64.8% of married women aged 40–49 report that they have never sought help or told anyone about their exposure to violence, compared to 80.8% of married women aged 20–24. Divorced, separated and widowed women are less silenced when they experience violence and seek help to stop it, with 24.1% reporting it, compared to 18.1% of married women. The presence of children in the family also negatively affects help-seeking, with 26.4% of married women without children seeking help to stop violence, compared to 21% of married women with five or more children.<sup>196</sup> The difference is also clear when analysing the educational level of married women. Illiterate women prefer silence, with a mere 7% reporting that they sought help when exposed to violence, compared with 38.8% of married women with a high school diploma or higher.

The type of violence also affects who married women turn to for help. When married women are subjected to physical violence, priority is given to their families (77%), followed by the husband's family (23.5%), neighbours (3.3%), social services institutions (2.8%) and police (2%). When subjected to both physical and sexual violence, married women resort to their families (57.7%), followed by their husband's family (18.2%), social service institutions (14%), neighbours (12.9%) and police (5.5%).<sup>197</sup>

On the other hand, the percentage of computerized reports of cases within the specific jurisdiction of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD) have increased by 33% between 2018 and 2020, as the PSD, through the FJPD, has developed 10 new reporting mechanisms, including social networking sites and a smart application. During the 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2020, the FJPD illuminated the administration building and some field departments in orange; 195 banners were posted in governmental departments, malls and pharmacies; 25 slides were prepared and broadcast an average of 1,000 times through slide screens; 300 awareness messages and radio interventions were broadcast on public radio; and two public transport buses in Amman were equipped with promotional posters – all aimed at raising awareness of the mechanisms for reporting cases of gender-based violence. Among FJPD staff, 41% of the increased female staff contributed to enhancing confidence to report on cases of gender-based violence.<sup>198</sup>

## **2- Crimes against public ethics and morals:**

In Jordan, there was a 9.5% decrease in the number of complaints of crimes against morality and public morals in 2020 compared to 2019, with 1,402 complaints filed, compared with 1,550 complaints in 2019. Amid COVID-19 precautionary measures and closures, a number of complaints increase, including for rape (up from 172 complaints

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> DoS. 2012. Population and Family Health Survey 2012. <https://bit.ly/3xoMlgw>.

<sup>198</sup> Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD), Public Security Directorate (PSD) data 2021.

filed in 2019 to 200 complaints filed in 2020); adultery (up from 118 complaints in 2019 to 146 in 2020), and abortion (up from 13 complaints in 2019 to 25 in 2020). In contrast, other complaints fell, including for prostitution, by 24% (with 41 complaints in 2020 compared to 54 in 2019), kidnapping, by 6.6% (with 168 complaints in 2020 versus 180 in 2019), and indecent assault, which fell by 18.8% (with 822 complaints in 2020, compared to 1,013 complaints in 2019).<sup>199</sup>

### **3- Murders:**

In 2020, there were 90 reported premeditated murders and nine fatal beatings leading to death, and the number of perpetrators of premeditated killings reached 201 persons, including seven women (3.5% of the total perpetrators), while 99 people were the victims of these crimes, including 22 women (22.2% of the total victims).<sup>200</sup>

In terms of the motives for committing crimes, according to the classifications adopted in a PSD report, the most prominent motives were personal and previous disputes (47.8%), with 43 crimes; followed by family disputes (31.1%), with 28 crimes; quarrels (7.8%), with seven crimes; the defense of “honour” (3.3%), with three crimes; revenge, neglect and lack of vigilance (2.2%) with two crimes each; financial reasons, moral decay, and murder under the influence of drugs, riots and vendetta (1.1%), with one crime each.<sup>201</sup>

### **4- Human trafficking:**

SDG Target 16.2 refers to ending child abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and all forms of violence and torture. This is measured by the number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 inhabitants, by gender, age and form of exploitation (Indicator 16.2.2).

Since the beginning of 2021, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit has dealt with 108 cases of suspected human trafficking, 19 of which have been proven, including 10 forced labour cases, five sexual exploitation cases, four organ removal cases, and six other organ removal cases have been foiled. Over the past 10 years, the Jordanian Judiciary has dealt with 263 cases of human trafficking, with 113 convictions, 33 decisions of non-responsibility, 85 acquittals, 16 decisions to amend the description of an offence, two decisions of non-jurisdiction, and 11 cases were dropped as a result of a public pardon. Forced labour ranked first in terms of the number of cases (with 65%), followed by sexual exploitation (with 21%), and organ removal (with 14%).

### **5- Family and Juvenile Protection Department cases:**

During 2020, the FJPD received 17,693 cases, of which 5,008 were filed for prosecution.

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<sup>199</sup> Criminal Information Department, PSD. 2020 Criminal Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/37gVPxx>.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

The victims were categorized as being: 66.3% adult females, 27.7% children and 6% adult males. The types of violence in these cases involved 58.7% physical abuse, 34% sexual abuse and 7.3% under another classification. Cases of domestic violence by husbands against wives rose from 80% to 82% of all FJPD cases between 2019 and 2020, and cases of violence by children against elderly mothers rose from 1.8% to 2.45% over the same period.<sup>202</sup>

During the last quarter of 2020, Article 7 on the settlement of family disputes in misdemeanors of the Domestic Violence Act (of 2017) was activated and 71 cases of family disputes were referred to the settlement officer, resulting in 31 agreements referred to settlement judges in Courts of First Instance.

According to the FJPD, the number of victims of domestic violence in 2020 reached 2,949 (14.2% male and 85.8% female); which is comparable to the number of victims in 2019 (2,959, of whom 87.8% were female). In terms of age, statistics show that the highest percentage of victims of domestic violence in 2020 were aged 18–27 (28%) and the lowest was among those aged 48 and over (6.9%).<sup>203</sup> The FJPD also announced a rise in reported cases of domestic violence (by around 33%) during the first month of the curfew in Jordan in 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. The Department received 1,435 cases during the first month of the curfew, with the majority of victims being children and women, while the most prominent forms of violence were physical and verbal violence.<sup>204</sup>

## **6- Justifying wife beating:**

The lower the age of ever-married women, the higher the percentage of women who justify being beaten by their husbands. Research reveals that 62.5% of married women in the 15–19 age group agreed with at least one specific justification for their husbands slapping or beating them. This percentage is the highest among all other age groups of ever-married women. The percentage among all age groups is 46% among wives and 69% among husbands. The survey identified seven reasons the wives used to justify their husbands beating or slapping them, namely: burning food, arguing with their husband, leaving the house without telling their husband, neglecting their children, insulting their husband, not obeying their husband, or the wife's relationship with other men. Among those aged 15–19, most wives justified their husbands beating them if they had a relationship with other men (59.1%), followed by insulting the husband (27.9%), disobeying the husband (18.9%), leaving the house without telling the husband (15.1%),

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<sup>202</sup> FJPD, PSD. 2021.

<sup>203</sup> PSD. 2021. Letter, Contact Number/1/40/M. Gender/43921, dated 9 August, addressed to the Economic and Social Council.

<sup>204</sup> A dialogue on the Kingdom channel with the Director of the FJPD on 12 May 2020 entitled "Domestic Violence and the Culture of Silence." <https://bit.ly/2xZjJLe>.

neglecting their children (12.4%), arguing with the husband (10.1%) and at the bottom of the list was burning food (2.2%). These attitudes in favour of justifying husbands' excuses for beating their wives are also prevalent among husbands in the aged 15–19 years), which were only slightly higher than the rates are among wives, with 64.2% of husbands agreeing with at least one specific reason that would justify them slapping or beating their wives out of the seven provided.<sup>205</sup>

### **7- Stereotypes of women:**

A 2019 study entitled “The phenomenon of harassment and reasons for denying it”<sup>206</sup> showed that: 51% of respondents in Jordan believe that men are more capable than women to lead a company or institution (70% male and 32% female); 55% believe that in politics, male leaders are better than women (71% male and 40% female); 48% find that decision-making positions should be occupied by men rather than women (67% male and 30% female); and 56% believe that women prefer men to shoulder responsibilities in family relationships (65% male and 47% female). The results also showed that 27% of all respondents believed that it was unacceptable for a wife's income to be higher than that of her husband (31% male and 23% female); 72% believed that women should complete their role in life by marrying and having children (87% male and 57% female); and 31% considered it embarrassing for a man to work in a job normally held by a woman (36% male and 27% female).<sup>207</sup>

Also, 13% of respondents believe that it is acceptable to tell sexual jokes about women among a group of male friends (22% male and 3% female), while 10% think it is normal for a man to show that he is controlling his wife in front of his male friends (13% male and 7% female). Another 38% of respondents find that women exaggerate when they say that their treatment in society involves discrimination and inequality (44% male and 33% female); 59% believe that women do not appreciate what men do for them (66% male and 53% female); and 37% of the respondents believe that many women interpret acts of good faith performed by men as discrimination against them (46% male and 27% female).<sup>208</sup>

### **8- Political violence:**

A study by the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network found<sup>209</sup> that 79.6% of all respondents experienced one or more patterns of systematic violence. The study

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205 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

206 Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies. 2019. The phenomenon of harassment and reasons for denying it <https://bit.ly/2VmKpRR>.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.

209 Arab Women Parliamentarians Network (“Pioneers”). 2019. “Violence Against Women in Politics: Arab Women Parliamentarians as a Model” <https://bit.ly/2JfruPo>.

included 216 parliamentarians from 15 Arab countries (21 from Jordan), of whom 43.8% were current parliamentarians and 56.2% were former parliamentarians.<sup>210</sup> The most common type of violence among women parliamentarians was psychological violence (76.2%), followed by economic violence (34.3%), physical violence (6.6%) and sexual violence (5.7%). Of these respondents, 47.1% were subjected to sexually suggestive verbal violence and 32.9% were threatened with kidnapping, murder, rape or physical abuse.

Males lead the list of perpetrators of violence against women parliamentarians (by 47%), followed by acts committed by both genders (42.2%), and by females (10.6%). On the relationship between violence, authority and power, the results showed that 31.1% of women parliamentarians who experienced violence reported that the perpetrator was an authority figure, followed by ordinary citizens (30.5%), unknown persons (27%), parliamentary colleagues (23.4%) and party colleagues (22.8%). One in three female parliamentarians who experienced violence reported experiencing it: on social media (32%), followed by traditional media (19.6%), at electoral gatherings and party headquarters (16% each), on the street (15%), at seminars and meetings (12.2%), within the family (11.2%) and finally by clans (7.5%). Most (77.8%) of women parliamentarians who have experienced violence have complained or reported, the majority turning to friends and family (34.7%), followed by security centres or police stations (31.7%), the judiciary (15%) and to media (5.4%). However, 22.1% of the parliamentarians surveyed never complained or reported it. As for the outcome of the complaint or reporting, 61.6% reported that there were no significant results for these complaints or reporting, compared to 28.7% who reported that the complaints and reporting had achieved results.<sup>211</sup>

In terms of the consequences of violence against women parliamentarians, 47.3% of those who were subjected to it reported that they felt intimidated, 32.3% were subjected to family pressure, 37.7% limited their freedom of expression, 31.7% limited their political activity, 19.1% said it prevented them from participating in public events, 12.5% withdrew from politics, 19.7% were denied economic opportunities or incurred financial losses, and 13.1% dropped their expressed desire to run for a political position, while violence did not directly affect 18.5% of them.<sup>212</sup>

### **9- Economic violence:**

The results of the 2017–2018 Population and Family Health Survey show only 14.6% of married women said they decide on their own how to manage their own financial gains (in particular resulting from work), while 7% said their husbands decide alone, and 78.4%

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210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid.

said they jointly decide with their husbands what to do with their financial gains.<sup>213</sup> The freedom of wives alone to dispose of their own financial gains increases according to the economic participation of spouses and their earnings, with 48.5% of wives alone deciding how to use their financial gains if their husbands do not have financial resources or do not work, and 20.9% deciding alone if their earnings exceed those of their husbands. In contrast, 20.7% of husbands said they decide on their own how to manage their financial gains, 73.8% decide jointly with their wives, and 5.4% of husbands said that their wives manage their financial gains.

By nationality, 12.1% of Jordanian women decide alone on how to use their financial gains, compared to 19.8% of Syrian women and 43.3% of women of other nationalities. The percentage is higher in urban areas, with 14.9% of all women in urban areas managing their financial gains alone, compared to 12.3% of women in rural areas. Women in the age group from 20–24 years are those most free to decide on how to use their financial gains (21.6%), while women in the age group 30–34 years are the least free (10%).

By educational level, Less-educated women have more freedom in deciding how to use their financial gains compared to higher educated women. The survey showed that 30.1% of women with elementary-level education and 31.7% of women with preparatory-level (middle school) education decide on their own how to dispose of their financial gains, whereas this percentage decreases to 17.5% among women whose have finished high school and 11.4% among women whose level of education is higher than high school.<sup>214</sup>

#### **10- Ownership of land and property:**

In Jordan, women alone own 17% of land, compared to 48% by men and 35% which was jointly owned, while female-owned land are made up 10.3% and male-owned land area was 67.2% of the total. When it comes to property, the percentage of apartments owned by women was 24.1%, versus 58.6% for men, while the total area of apartments owned by women was 23% versus 69.5% for males. In terms of joint ownership of land between females and males, it has increased slightly (to 35% in 2018, up from 34.5% in 2017, and shared ownership of apartments increased to 17.4%, up from 17.1% in 2017.<sup>215</sup>

#### **11- Agricultural ownership:**

The number of owners holding one or more agricultural holdings was 101,995, of which 6,133 were women (6%). The total area of agricultural holdings was 2,818,598 dunams, of which 59,533 dunams, or 2.1%, were owned by women. The average size of holding of the total area of ownership was 9.7 was dunams for women and 26.2 dunams for males.<sup>216</sup>

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213 DoS. 2019. Population and Family Health Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/2T2gObV>.

214 Ibid.

215 DoS. 2018. Gender Indicators. <https://bit.ly/3yq3y3t>.

216 DoS. 2017. Agricultural Census. <https://bit.ly/3lu3AUp>.

## 12- Annual household income and expenditures:

In 2017–2018, the average annual household income in Jordan for families headed by men was JOD 11,518, of which JOD 4,794 came from employment (42%), JOD 1,090 from private work (9.5%), JOD 1,859 from rental income (16%), JOD 103 from property income (1%), and JOD 3,669 from remittances (32%).<sup>217</sup> The average annual household income in Jordan for families headed by women was JOD 9,534 of which JOD 2,616 came from employment (27%), JOD 302 from private work (3%), JOD 1,875 from rental income (20%), JOD 38 from property income (0.4%), and JOD 4,700 from remittances (49%). Families headed by women relied on rents and remittances for 69% of their income and on work and employment for 31%. Meanwhile, 51% of families headed by men relied on income from private work and employment. Families headed by men in Jordan spend on average JOD 1,077 per year above their average income, with an average annual expenditure of JOD 12,596, of which JOD 4,136 is spent on food (33%), JOD 8,240 on non-food and service items (67%). Families headed by women in Jordan spend approximately JOD 481 per year above their average income, with an average annual expenditure of 10,016, of which JOD 3,133 is spent on food (31%) and JOD 6,882 on non-food and service items (69%). It is worth noting that families headed by women spend more on average on health care per year than families headed by men, by 75 dinars (JOD 562 for families headed by women compared to 487 for families headed by men).<sup>218</sup>

## 13- Deprivation of inheritance:

By the end of 2020 the Takharuj regulations (on reconciliation between heirs, distribution of the inheritance between them and their notarization in court), were amended to prohibit the registration of any reconciliation before four months after the death of the heir have passed, instead of three months. Inheritance and Takharuj transactions for 2020 amounted to 24,960 transactions, of which 4,351 were Takharuj transactions (17.4%). Takharuj transactions accounted for 20.7% of the number of inheritance and reconciliation transactions over five years (2016–2020).<sup>219</sup> There is no provision in the Personal Status Code that deals with the issue of joint property between spouses and how to dispose of it in the event of separation or divorce, thus depriving wives of their money acquired during married life.

## 14- Alimony of wives, children and parents:

In 2020, wife alimony claims decreased by 19.8% compared to 2019. There was no significant change in the average provision for alimony for wives, with the average in 2020 being JOD 81.40 and the average in 2019 being JOD 81.70. Child alimony claims also declined during 2020, by 18%. However, the average alimony support sentence increased

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217 DoS. 2018. Household Expenditure and Income Survey 2017–2018. <https://bit.ly/3rOsX4F>.

218 Ibid.

219 Supreme Judge Department. 2020. Annual Statistical Report. <https://bit.ly/3jmbsox>.

to JOD 78.40, compared to JOD 71.50 in 2019. In contrast, in 2020, claims for parental alimony increased by 8.3%, and the average judgment for parental alimony increased to JOD 66.70 from JOD 64.80 in 2019.<sup>220</sup>

### **15- Women's access to justice:**

Stereotypes, a culture of silence and social stigma remain the most important social impediments to women's access to justice. Women account for just 1 in 4 women complainants in human rights cases and 1 in 5 complainants in criminal cases, according to a 2016 analysis of the number of complainants in such cases before Jordanian courts, which reflects women's poor access to justice systems due to multiple hurdles. Judicial reports for 2016 indicate that the number of complainants in human rights cases amounted to 106,421 persons, of whom 24,775 were women (representing 23.2% of the total), while the number of complainants in criminal cases amounted to 78,019 persons, of which 16,523 were women (21.1% of the total).<sup>221</sup>

### **Recommendations of Chapter 2:**

1. Develop statistical systems to keep pace with the rapid changes in the field of statistics, and to benefit from the experiences of other countries in this field.
2. Provide accurate, detailed, comprehensive, periodic, high-quality and gender-sensitive indicators in different areas, particularly on social, economic and political issues, and gender-based violence.
3. Invest in national surveys (both quantitative and qualitative) to continually collect information and data that is regularly updated. This is to fill in gaps in unavailable data such as data on women and the environment, poor women, and women's contribution to unpaid work.
4. Align national indicators with the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, updating and continuously developing them to provide the necessary data and information to ensure that Jordan is among the countries with the highest number of indicators compatible with the SDG indicators.
5. Provide detailed information and data on gender-based violence, by gender, age, nationality and province, and according to all demographic and social variables, in the public and private spheres.
6. Allocate funds and mobilize financial resources for the Department of Statistics, ministries, governmental institutions, the military and security sectors and civil society organizations, and from varied sources to promote gender-sensitive information, statistical systems and surveys (like a time-use survey).
7. Conduct regular analyses of statistics and gender surveys, to identify challenges, gaps and progress made in various areas, and make them readily available to decision-

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ministry of Justice. 2016. Judicial Reports. <https://bit.ly/3jq5mU3>.

makers and stakeholders.

8. Build the capacity of employees of the Department of Statistics, ministries, governmental institutions, the military and security sectors and civil society in the field of gender-sensitive information, statistical systems and surveys, and conduct training on the issuance of annual gender-sensitive reports.
9. Produce periodicals and promote the use of technology and social media, to disseminate gender-sensitive information, statistics and surveys, to ensure that they reach decision-makers, so that they can use and benefit from them in developing legislation, policies, strategies, programmes and executive plans.
10. Review the information and statistics on Jordan contained in regional and international reports, ascertain their source and accuracy, and update them, given their importance to the reports based on which Jordan is assessed, and against which Jordan is ranked among the countries of the world – such as the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Report, the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Report and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals progress report.

## Chapter 3: Opinions and perspectives regarding gender equality and social trends

### Summary:

The purpose of this chapter of the report is to try to understand in depth the nature of the efforts made, the challenges and the difficulties faced in promoting gender equality, and to achieve Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular through strategies, plans and actions to include gender in all aspects of formal and informal institutional work. This aims to identify gender gaps and to provide comparative analyses at the national level of the current situation of both sexes through qualitative data, to identify gender differences related to social, economic, cultural and political rights and to reach some conclusions and recommendations.

The focus group method was adopted and in-depth interviews with gender equality stakeholders were held, with six focus groups covering the north, central and southern regions. Targeted stakeholders included two categories: youth girls and boys, and representatives of official institutions and service-providers.

In addition, 15 in-depth interviews were held with a number of official institutions, committees, national councils and stakeholders concerned with gender equality and women's empowerment, with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the reality of gender equality and identifying the challenges and gaps facing their work within the pillars of national policies, strategies and government plans to support gender equality, economic participation, political participation and decision-making, education, vocational training and empowerment, health, gender-based violence prevention, social protection, poverty, marginalized groups, prevailing cultural and social patterns and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study also includes some recommendations, the most important of which are the need to: ensure the inclusion of gender in the policies of public sector institutions and to follow-up on their implementation; install gender units associated with the minister or secretary-general; amend the Electoral Law to increase the seats reserved for women, amend the voting mechanism, follow-up with political parties and establish controls to ensure that women have equal opportunities to run for office, and provide technical and financial support; establish more nurseries in the public and private sectors, and enhance the process of redistributing responsibilities for family care; establish a permanent market for women's products and market them throughout the Kingdom; create special programmes that highlight women's leadership; train media professionals and citizen journalists on gender equality; network among institutions, civil society organizations and mechanisms that provide protection and care services to create a unified case-

management system; support the social work profession; establish an institute to train social researchers; include human rights in school curricula; harmonize learning outcomes with the requirements of the labour market; and expand capacity-building support for gender mainstreaming in the security and military sectors.

## Research methodology

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the reality of gender equality in Jordan, a qualitative research approach was adopted, employing focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, with six focus groups of (10–12) female and male participants each, divided by regions (north, central and south), three of which targeted female and male service-providers from official institutions (municipalities, the National Aid Fund, political parties, local associations, journalists and media professionals, associations that care for people with disabilities, trade unions, owners of productive projects, and female and male participants in the women’s empowerment and gender equality programmes). Discussions focused on social, economic, political and cultural dimensions from a gender perspective and topics included poverty, child marriage, gender-based violence, health care, economic empowerment and women’s participation in the labour market (formal and informal), women in peace and security, political and decision-making positions, as well as customs, traditions and prevailing social norms. In addition, three groups of boys and girls aged 13 to 18 were organized to understand the needs of this specific age group. Topics for discussion included social norms from a gender perspective, family upbringing, domestic violence, bullying, gender-based discrimination, health services for girls and boys, reproductive health, the impact of home quarantine as a result of the pandemic and the impact of distance online education. Northern Region group discussions were organized in Irbid; Central Region Group discussions were held in Amman; and Southern Region group discussions were hosted in Aqaba.

In addition, 15 in-depth interviews were held with a number of official institutions, committees, national councils and stakeholders concerned with gender equality and women’s empowerment issues, to gain a deeper understanding of the reality and to identify the challenges and gaps they face in their work. A guide for in-depth interviews was developed for each entity according to the nature of its work and the services it provides within specific research pillars.

## The findings of focus group discussions

The different **focus group discussions** (for institutional service-providers and for youth) have been analysed, with conclusions organized around specific topics of discussion, as outlined in Annex 1:

## 1. The concepts of gender equality, gender, justice, equity and sustainable development

The discussion among institutional service-providers revealed that most participants believe that equality is concerned with rights and duties and that it cannot be perfect between women and men. Some referred to the grace of Islam, which gave women their rights, albeit not equal to men in the areas of inheritance, for example, also expressing that women cannot bear the same type of hard work as men or bear the same physical and material burdens, thus arguing that there can be no equality between them because their needs are different. Moreover, some made the point that our societies do not accept equality but instead accept the concept of justice. On the other hand, some participants affirmed that equality is a right between women and men, but it is not applied in practice in some aspects. For example, although the Jordanian Constitution provides for equality, discrimination still exists in some laws, particularly the Labour Law and on the subject of nationality. With regard to the concept of gender, views were varied on the roles played by both men and women, according to time, place and culture, and there was some confusion between sex and gender and their respective roles, some citing the physical natural differences created by God: *“men must do things that women are not required to do, and men cannot bear children as women do”*. Some participants pointed to gender as a concept that is enhanced to highlight the role of women and men, which must be applied at the household level without being inconsistent with religion and society, saying: *“we don’t accept equality. We are under Islam, we have justice between the two genders and we don’t want equality”*. As for the concept of justice and equity, some pointed out that it means equal opportunities, directing possibilities and abilities: *“justice means equity in rights, and Islam calls for justice”*, while others pointed out that it means allowing males and females to work to prepare for life according to their abilities and readiness. The concept of sustainable development was noted by some as the evolution of society’s specific needs and meeting them through strategies. Others said it is dependent on the regulations and laws established by the State and that it is a socioeconomic concept aimed at improving the living conditions of everyone in the society, with the continuous integration and development of the methods and means of production: *“we work on the development of society in all of its aspects up to the climatic dimensions and all sectors and all mechanisms and all social groups”*. Others said that sustainable development is a comprehensive and continuous concept of developmental processes: *“when I want to develop a society, I start by developing humans”*; *“we include young people and have a role in the labour market; we are working to build families, communities and individuals, and thus building the entire city without compromising future generations.”* Others stressed the importance of equality and justice in achieving sustainability, and that public participation and training are important elements to include in sustainable development.

With reference to the second focus group category (youth), most of the participants, boys and girls alike, emphasized that the concept of gender equality means equality of rights with no discrimination. Some stated: *“equality gives them all their rights”*, that equality includes rights for both men and women according to their needs, and that it means no discrimination between women and men: *“the girl and the boy are the same”*; *“women are half of the society.”* Gender, as a concept, was not recognized by the vast majority of participants, with some reporting that they had never heard of the term before. Some defined the social roles and stereotypes of both men and women: *“every boy has a duty to make money and every girl has to study”*; *“a girl is emotional and a boy is more rational.”* In turn, some female participants said women work more professionally and more sincerely. Some referred to justice as better than equality; a point that was also made by representatives of the focus groups among institutions. Some youth participants also referred to the impossibility of equality between women and men. Some boys expressed sympathy for what they characterized as women’s poor physical abilities, while most girls reported their desire to achieve equality, which is not applied in practice: *“we want them to be the same, but the reality is different”*. Most boys and girls reported the need for justice and equity in treatment, education and employment: *“it is fair that education is for the girl and the boy,”*; *“justice means that there should be no injustice, neither to the female nor the male”*; *“the father must be fair to both the boys and the girls”*; *“it is not fair that they deprive the girls from work”*. Some girls also pointed out that women do their jobs faithfully but are more vulnerable to injustice: *“in our Arab society, injustice befalls females more [than males]”*.

## **2. Awareness of legislation and laws concerned with equality between the sexes**

Among institutional service-providers, women focus group discussion participants agreed that males’ perspectives still dominate in politics and legislation, limiting women’s access to decision-making positions: *“we have competent women and they have the same brain as men, but still we would not see them in decision-making positions”*. The majority of participants pointed out that injustice may occur more when applying the law, with one stating: *“sometimes a girl complains about a boy and is believed and the boy is not, and all the while it was her who was lying [and not the boy]”*. Some participants pointed to the existence of fair and protective laws for women, such as the Personal Status Law, which had been amended in favour of women, pointing out that in cases of discord and conflict between a married couple, a wife’s witnesses were more believable than a husband’s: *“if a woman had two witnesses and a man had two witnesses, the woman’s witnesses would be believed [but not the man’s]”*. In addition, some said that the procedures for redemption (*Khul*) have become faster, adding: *“there is no woman who would reach the court and would end up losing.”*

Participants were of the view that certain provisions of the Labour Code are not being applied, such as the subject of nurseries and wage discrimination, and that certain bylaws and regulations make distinctions between men and women, such as the family allowances assigned to men under the Civil Service Law, and the fact that female officers can only receive family allowances if their husbands are dead or incapacitated. Some pointed out that the problem is not in the laws themselves but in their implementation. For example, despite the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, some live in distress with their families and do not receive their right to education, training and health care: *“most of our institutions do not have a sign language interpreter, even in hospitals, and female marginalization is much more prevalent [than male marginalization]”*; *“there was an opportunity to employ females and males in a soap factory, but the parents refused because of their fear for the girl because the environment was unsafe”*. When it comes to divorce laws, according to some participants: *“(90%) of the law works in favour of women in terms of divorce”*, and *“if I want to divorce my wife, she will get all of her rights and then some”*.

Institutional service-providers were unanimous in knowing about the existence of a law to protect against domestic violence, adding that there has been a noticeable increase in domestic violence against females, stating *“women are always the victims”*, with the use of the concept of “honour” as a pretext, *“when a woman is innocent and some choose to stab her in her honour”*. One participant pointed out that laws often take the direction of the application of penalties, and this is an indication of the weakness of the state and its weak role and the decline of values and morals, *“we need to work on concepts and values before people reach a harsh penal system”*. Participants were unanimous in the view that laws to protect women are not enough on their own, but what is important is the follow-up, evaluation and review of procedures for applying existing laws.

Meanwhile, the focus group discussions with youth revealed that participating boys and girls were not aware that current laws perpetuate gender discrimination. With respect to discrimination at work, participants reported that there is discrimination at work, as some companies employ only Jordanians, and that there are restrictions on women’s areas of work.

### **3. Political participation and decision-making positions**

The participants of focus groups with institutional service-providers stated that family and society have the greatest role to play in supporting women to facilitate their participation in political life and their access to decision-making positions: *“how could she reach decision-making positions, if society singles her out and makes her feel like the weakest part?”* Some indicated that women do not support women because they share patriarchal views that consider men leaders: *“the mother thinks highly of her male son*

*because he is the head of the clan, and the one who carries the name of the family and is provider*". It was also pointed out that familial upbringing creates stereotypes about women's inability to face up to the challenges of political participation and family burdens turn them off from aspiring to reach decision-making positions. In contrast, participants felt that laws and legislation have given women the right to participate in elections through competition and quotas, but that the method of counting the votes is unfair, as women might obtain a large number of votes in one region without winning, while others might succeed with fewer votes in another region, resulting in the lack of access of many capable women to decision-making positions: *"the law does women injustice in the process of counting votes"*.

Some participants stressed that one of the biggest challenges to women's political participation is their lower access to financing and their refusal to buy votes, as is sometimes done by men. Additionally, they said women's choice to appear on regular lists (for open competition rather than quotas) was not methodical, as some clans refused to nominate women, except those with few members, as they realized that they couldn't nominate a man for all seats, so they nominated a woman so that they could have the chance to win a parliamentary seat, rather than because they believe in the woman's abilities.

Regarding political parties, the majority of the participants iterated that the parties do not have an effective role in promoting the democratic process: *"we are a non-democratic people and it is up to a Secretary-General of a party to nominate or not to nominate any candidate"*. The participants also stressed that most parties do not provide strong programmes and clear plans, saying *"parties are shops"*, and *"yes, the party culture has changed somewhat but the actions and interests of the party's leaders make people afraid of them"*. They pointed out that parties were originally weak, framed by social and tribal dimensions, and that there are those who search for Sheikhdum through the formation of a party, being active only during the election period: *"Unfortunately, the parties become active when elections happen. And when their interests are achieved, they just pull back."* The participants said there is a reluctance among young people, as well as women, to join parties, and even fear by some of party affiliation. In contrast, some stressed the roles of women in parties, who are effective, but their participation is low: *"often times the challenge for women is from members in the same party"*. The participants also pointed out that there is no party culture in our society: *"in Jordan, we do not have party awareness, nor do we have a political party movement"*.

On the contribution of the decentralization experiment to highlighting the role of women in public work, most participants underlined that women had not played any major role in the process, and that decentralization had succeeded in some governorates with the

efforts of some people who had proven its merits. Some underscored that women did not take initiative and did not communicate with others in the field, *“you have now reached the stage of shouldering responsibilities and you therefore have to prove your competency”*; and *“women need to work hard and not say that laws must be fair to them”*. On the other hand, some female participants argued that there is a deliberate exclusion of women from the sessions of Provincial Councils while other participants noted that the appointment mechanism in the Decentralization Act had adversely affected women.

#### **4. Violence against women**

Focus group participants from institutions attributed the causes of violence against women to a lack of access to education and lack of income, as *“most of the women who ask for the National Aid [Fund] suffer from violence and their poverty compels them to accept violence”*; *“I am required to work and spend on the house ... but our parents tell us to keep a low profile and not to draw attention and just take care of our kids”*. They signalled the lack of application of the Domestic Violence Protection Law in schools and hospitals, in addition to the lack of awareness of violence in general and a lack of knowledge of the law. Participants referred to the forms of violence to which women are subjected in the family and society during their lifetime, including physical and psychological violence, as well as the existence of hidden forms of violence: *“violence is not only beatings, but also ill-treatment, control of property and being forced to forfeit one’s inheritance is violence”*. The participants also underlined that social upbringing and a culture of taboos produce vulnerable women who accept violence and also allow the perpetrator to get off the hook, scot-free.

Institutional service-providers’ views varied between supporters and opponents of providing protection to the family when subjected to violence: *“if I go to the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, my daughters will not get married and will be shunned by society, as this society will consider it a taboo”*; while others were adamant that *“women should inform the Family and Juvenile Protection Department if their fathers or brothers did not support them”*. Meanwhile, some participants stressed that filing a complaint at the Family and Juvenile Protection Department should be the last resort after the involvement of parents and relatives in finding a solution. At the same time, there were some survivors in the group, one of whom said: *“I will not be silent. I will speak up. My husband used to hit me and I sought the help of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department and I stopped this violence against me in its tracks”*. Some participants noted that some employees of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department in some governorates do not act professionally when a woman files a complaint against her husband. Regarding the reporting process, the participants stressed the important role of institutions and service-providers in raising women’s awareness of their rights and guiding them to competent authorities that may assist them in reporting or in bringing their cases to the courts. They added that it is important to publicize services through

the media, social media, mosques and schools, as well as to hold cultural seminars on issues of violence against women. In the view of some participants, society considers the participation of women in programmes against domestic violence to be a rebellion of sorts. Some participants also stressed that the Crime Prevention Law (No. 7 of 1952) perpetuates some cases of violence, as the administrative ruler will ask for a written statement by the person committing the violence pledging not to repeat it; however, the violence will continue all the same, as *“solutions provided by the Family and Juvenile Protection Department bring the husband over and solve the dispute only for the married couple to go home and for the husband to earnestly punish his wife for lodging a complaint against him”*. Some participants emphasized the need for a comprehensive law to deter all forms of violence to protect women at all stages of their lives, psychologically, physically and financially: *“if she makes her way to the Family and Juvenile Protection Department and there is no deterring law in force, she will wind up dead in the morgue”*; *“some cases may be referred to the courts, but nepotism promotes the perpetuation of violence.”*

The focus groups among youth reacted strongly when the topic of violence against women was raised, demonstrating their knowledge of the forms of verbal, physical, psychological, sexual and online violence, and that violence may occur inside and outside the home, saying: *“there is psychological or physical violence when a woman has no value in her home, she gets beaten and humiliated”*; *“there is family violence inside the household between the husband and the wife ... there is violence by brothers against their sisters”*; *“when the father violently bullies his sons and daughters, they take it out onto the street and start bullying others”*. Some of the forms of violence referred to by boys and girls include the forced marriage of girls, and the silence of a father and mother towards the violent behaviour of a brother against his sister and his control of her inside the house, and that the girl is subjected to violence at all stages of her life: *“There is a verbal violence from parents, especially against unmarried daughters by their father and brother.”* Some also mentioned women being subjected to indecent acts and bullying at work, while noting that this is not common: *“rarely do we hear about harassment at work”*. Most boys and girls also confirmed the existence of acts contrary to public decency, online harassment and verbal harassment on the street.

Both boys and girls alike had knowledge of reporting mechanisms in cases of indecent acts in general or online, adding that because they are minors, they must seek help from their parents: *“we need to inform the parent or just block it”*; *“in the case of cyber threat, we need to complain to the Cybercrime Unit and I must have an adult with me”*. Referencing the act of public indecency within the family, which the participants described as psychologically destructive behaviour, some girls stressed the need to report it to the Family and Juveniles Protection Department, but some rejected the idea of reporting it and gave priority to reporting it instead to their mother or relatives.

The views of boys and girls on marrying off underaged girls ranged between supporters and opponents. Some said marriage should be linked to the consent of the girls and their ability to take responsibility, *“marriage is good for girls if they are accepting and up to the task”*. Others noted that the marriage of a minor deprives her of education, and of all things in her life, and that she will end up with a responsibility greater than her age. Others added that the marriage of minors contributes to the loss of skills and affects the female psyche: *“if there is a marriage of minors it is necessary to prosecute the one who allowed this marriage”*.

Some youth participants linked the causes of violence to issues of honour or using honour as a pretext for violence: *“there are family problems caused by issues of honour”*; *“no one does this to their daughter unless it was an issue of honour”*; *“all those who beat up their daughters and kill them say that they are defending their honour, and this is ‘haram’ (unfair)”*. Some boys emphasized the need to be overprotective of girls so that they would not fall in love with the wrong guy who could take advantage of her: *“as an Islamic society, we must preserve our values and protect our religion, both for males and females”*; *“if every one of us kept a strong faith, we would be able not to let our eyes stray in the direction of girls, but unfortunately there are boys who would badger girls who wear full face veils”*.

## 5. Economic participation

The institutional participants agreed that there was more than one reason for women’s low economic participation and that the issue was not limited to legislation, as the working environment is not gender sensitive. They mentioned wage discrimination, lack of transportation, in addition to some employers’ preconceived ideas, and preferences for hiring male over female employees, especially those who are married or newly married women – for fear that they will get pregnant and have children. The participants also cited a lack of commitment to the application of flexible work regimes and the lack of commitment to providing nurseries in the workplace, despite the amendments of the law. Moreover, they noted the chill effect of societal pressures and culture on women’s career paths and ability to work only within certain hours and in environments away from men. In addition, they pointed out that women’s participation in the labour market in some jobs may not even cover the leaving the home, and that there is exploitation and ill-will by some employers, as the worker signs on for a minimum wage salary but may receive less than that: *There is exploitation of workers and employees by employers by signing contracts at a salary of 260 dinars and they receive only 140 dinars*. Women’s preference for work in the public sector in particular was also noted.

Some participants said they believe the societal views about women’s work have changed, due to the country’s poor financial situation, and families are ready to let their daughters work in the event that job opportunities are available. Still, they said women tend to be

directed towards administrative jobs more than towards establishing small businesses. Participants stressed that if women start businesses with the support of organizations, they often encounter marketing challenges, which make the project unsustainable. Some participants also pointed out that few women benefit from financing and loan programmes because they cannot fulfil the requirements of the banks, which makes them turn to lending institutions. Participants referred to additional challenges faced by women who received loans from these institutions, to establish businesses or buy private property: *“one of those women’s husband defrauded her and took her money and married another woman and she [the borrower and original wife] ended up in prison”*. In the view of some participants, lending institutions should monitor, follow up and evaluate projects periodically to ensure continuity and provide technical support if necessary. Some participants suggested that more oversight of loan programmes is also needed: *“lending institutions contribute to the impoverishment of women; they are not controlled by the Central Bank or by the State, and therefore they are interested in profit-making more than in supporting women”*. Some participants noted the importance of women remaining in the labour market and not withdrawing. Some stressed that vocational training programmes do not contribute to equipping women with skills that would meet the needs of the labour market and enhance their economic participation.

The focus group discussions among youth yielded similar perspectives, with boys and girls noting that there is discrimination in the workplace, as some jobs are only open to men. Besides official restrictions, there are also cultural restrictions, in that *“some parents forbid their girls from working in certain jobs”*. Some participants also pointed to the stereotypes influencing why girls’ work in some professions: *“Restaurants prefer to employ girls to attract more customers”*. At the same time, the taboo against men and women mixing in the workplace was noted, with some participants expressing great reservations to such contact, even if needed for expert medical consultations: *“I would never let my wife pay a visit to a male gynecologist; it must be a female gynecologist”*.

One youth participant pointed out that home is the natural place for women, unless there is a material need for her to work: *“if her husband was negligent in meeting and fulfilling her rights, then she can go to work”*; *“if everything is provided for her, then home is where she belongs”*; *“for some of us, if a girl gets married, she just stays at home and prepares some pastries”*. The participants argued that working outside the home could expose women to humiliation, as is the case with women working in the agricultural sector, especially Syrian women. *“There are many women who work on farms more than young men and are insulted by the owner of the farm, and women are offended by the owner of the farm, especially the Syrians”*. Some boys and girls stated that at work men are preferred over women because the employer perceives women as not being able to do that which is asked of them.

## 6. Education, training and empowerment

Institutional participants in the focus groups emphasized the need for coordination between educational institutions and the labour market so as to meet the need for skilled graduates: *“It is necessary for there to be training and agreements between the bodies concerned with women, education and higher education”* and for education to include schools, curricula, teachers, family and society as a whole. The participants also stressed the importance of education in building personality, intellect and skills, whether that education is academic or vocational in nature. Participants also noted the importance of training teachers to deal with gender equality issues. Some participants stated that educational curricula reinforce the stereotypical image of women, and that the educational environment is not good, which reflects negatively on the quality of education and skills development.

The opinions of institutional participants differed regarding vocational education, which some viewed negatively because it focuses on students with lower grades, that vocational training is stereotypical and that it does not serve the labour market. Meanwhile, others view it positively, saying it has contributed to the entry of women as well as young men into unprecedented vocational training disciplines, saying for example: *“we have women who are training on a hybrid-electric vehicle”*. Participants stressed that vocational training is available to everyone, male and female, and that some vocational training centres even provide transportation. Moreover, businesses can be established after vocational training as well as internships and other ways to access the labour market. They also referred to the role of the National Employment and Training Company, which is affiliated with the Army. It enters into agreements with associations or municipalities, conducts vocational training, and employs both females and males in somewhat different professions, with women able to participate in the professions of wall-coating, sanitary supplies, painting and plumbing. However, according to one participant: *“there are women who are plumbers, but their numbers are small and their work is confined to the family or with relatives”*. Some participants also pointed out that educational curricula do not motivate students to engage in vocational occupations.

Among the youth focus groups, boys and girls had divergent views on the contribution of educational curricula to the promotion of gender equality. Some said that there are no materials in the educational curricula that promote women’s rights and showcased their leadership roles. For example, Jordan’s secondary school curriculum has a Civic Education Course that includes a section on human rights, but some said that teachers do not focus on it. Others said that the Civic Education Course included human rights, equality and freedom of expression, and pointed to the Islamic Education Course on men’s and women’s rights. Moreover, the History Course presented some of the women’s historical contributions.

With regard to vocational training, both boys and girls noted its importance and role in strengthening the personality of young women and men, expanding training options and developing women's talents for crafts that can secure them a decent life. Others suggested that an Occupational Practice Certificate be provided after vocational training. However, others voiced that vocational training focuses on the stereotypical labour market divisions for certain professions, streaming "*males for agriculture, carpentry and electricity, and girls for sewing, handicrafts, embroidery, soap-making, cooking and confectionery*". Participants emphasized the need to standardize male and female vocational curricula in schools.

## **7. Women and the media**

The majority of participants (both institutional and youth) underscored that the media contribute to promoting a stereotypical image of women, and that media outlets do not work efficiently to promote gender equality or focus on women's issues. They also do not highlight successful women in decision-making positions or focus on their success stories. Some participants pointed to the existence of exploitation and commodification of women's bodies in commercial advertisements and promotions, saying: "*the media do not do justice to women.*" They noted the lack of media coverage of the rights and entitlements of citizens and the rights of male and female workers: "*the media cover events in the streets and report them live. As for the issue of rights' awareness, they do not cooperate with us*"; "*our media are stage-managed; they are the media of institutions, reflecting each institution's point of view*". Participants also emphasized the fact that the media can also play a positive role, promoting series, lectures and seminars, and coverage (whether in visual, print, broadcast or social media) that may help to raise the status of women and awareness of their rights and highlight the importance of redistributing roles between women and men.

## **8. The cultural and religious system and prevailing patterns**

Among the focus groups with institutional service-providers, views on culture and religious systems and the ability of prevailing patterns to promote change towards greater gender equality varied, with one pointing out that there is a lack of efforts by organizations working in this field: "*most of those working in this area are women of a certain class and rarely do we find men with them working on gender*". Participants noted that there is a male-dominated current that adheres to cultural tradition to achieve its interests and that rejects change. Some pointed out that culture sometimes leads to discrimination in rights between women and men, and it defines certain paths and stereotypical roles for women. Therefore, some suggested that female and male participation should start from within the family through the most important role, of the mother, in preparing future generations. Concerning the role of religious institutions in promoting positive cultural beliefs, some indicated that their role is traditional and

some of these institutions repeat traditional social roles and promote the subordination of women. However, another view emphasized that their role is significant in combating violence and empowering women. Others noted that the Awqaf Ministry conducts awareness-raising programmes on some societal issues, including child marriage, the dangers of the Internet, domestic violence and violent extremism. On the subject of underage marriage, the participants were unanimous that it is a great injustice that falls on the girl physically and psychologically, “[h]er body is simply just not ready for pregnancy, lactation and great responsibility”. Others pointed out that child marriage was increasing among Syrian refugees because their culture encourages underage marriage.

Among the youth focus groups, the topic of stereotypes regarding who should take responsibility for care and domestic work was raised, with some boys saying that household chores are the tasks of the mother and the girls in the house. Meanwhile, others said that they help with the housework, especially if it is requested by their mother, but if the request comes from their sister, they may only help her for a certain benefit: *“I help my sister so that she will buy me a pack of cigarettes”*. One of the boys said: *“I help my mother with washing the dishes and my father with washing his car”*. Another said: *“girls take care of the house and the boys spend their time playing around”*. Others stressed that there ought to be more cooperation between spouses and children of both sexes when it comes to household chores: *“mothers must teach their sons from a tender age to help with the housework”*, while another suggested that if the mother was old or ill, boys should take on the household chores according to the burden-sharing principle.

The majority of the youth participants, boys and girls, emphasized that discrimination in parental treatment between boys and girls exists in families, and that there is a difference in the mother and father’s treatment of boys and girls, with boys treated better *“because he bears more than the girl”*, and more limits placed on the freedom of girls compared to boys: *“the boy can leave the house and live freely but the girl is told to stay at home”*. Others felt that family upbringing, as well as customs and traditions shape gender roles: *“from the days of my grandfather, we have been told that a girl must not do this and must not do that”*, and that discrimination still exists despite global progress: *“now our generation is evolving and we are giving girls equal rights to boys but discrimination still exists”*.

The youth participants reported that male preference is marked in their society: *“when a woman gets married and gives birth to a girl, the parents are sad; if she has a boy, they give out sweets”*. In contrast, one participant pointed out that the value of girls in his family is greater than that of the boy, but customs and traditions restrict girls and determine the course of their education according to the wishes of the parents. Participants mentioned that there is a negative view by society towards non-veiled girls while others noted that marriage *“is not based on coercion and religion also is not based on coercion”*.

## 9. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality

Institutional service-providers opined that COVID-19 has affected all members of the family in economic, psychological and social terms, although the greatest impact has been on women, both at home and at work as the burden of responsibility has fallen squarely on the shoulders of the mother and girls at home. Others ideated that women are more affected by nursery closures and distance education, as some mothers had to leave their jobs, while others remarked that the presence of all family members at home cast a heavy shadow on family relations, increasing domestic violence, divorce, quarrels and conflict, coupled with the inability to report due to the presence of the abuser inside the home. On the other hand, other participants noted that men seem to have become more understanding of the nature of the domestic burdens shouldered by women within the home, and some couples have tried to provide some help, such as cooking.

Among the youth focus groups, boys and girls reiterated that the pandemic has affected all members of the family and increased the burdens of mothers and girls in particular, who are more likely to be married off young or saddled with household chores: *“it has affected girls’ psyche because they shouldered more work at home, and the burden has increased on mothers since they used to study and work all the time, and ended up borrowing money from husbands who stopped working”*. On the other hand, some boys stated that the impact of COVID-19 was greater on them because they used to go out and the pandemic has forced them to stay home: *“boys got negatively impacted more than girls who are used to staying at home anyway.”*

There was consensus that COVID-19 has greatly affected the quality of education, especially for public school students and those with weak Internet connection: *“the Internet connection is weak and they gave you models and pictures that do not appear in the exam, how could we answer the questions?!”*. In contrast, one young female participant remarked that the pandemic has contributed to the development of skills, talents and abilities, saying: *“I drew a few paintings and wrote a few articles”*. Others pointed to the psychological and material impacts of COVID-19: *“Corona separated people from each other because of the fear of infection; Corona affected the family’s material income”*. On the other hand, some saw the lockdown period as having strengthened family relations: *“we were 12 young men at home and Corona brought us closer to each other and we got to know each other more”*.

Participants, both boys and girls, agreed that health services were generally good and available, but opinions varied on the health needs of young people and the services available to them, including those who praised the health centres available. However, some pointed out that health services for their age related to puberty and sexual health are not available, and that the only places to get informed about such issues are parents,

the Internet, or schoolteachers or counsellors. Some participants indicated that they ask other young people who have experienced the same thing, stressing that there is a culture of taboo towards sexual health issues, so they sometimes turn to their friends. Some also emphasized their relationship with their mothers: *“I talk with my father in relation to the financial matters, but I talk to my mother with respect to personal and emotional issues”*. One participant with a disability stated that this is harder if one has a disability, such as being deaf or dumb, who cannot discuss questions about sexual health with their mothers as sign language is not helpful in this regard and makes them feel ashamed.

## **10. Women in peace and security and preventing violent extremism**

Some institutional participants noted that women’s presence in peace and security is very important, as well as their participation in combating extremism, because during war, women are the most vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence. Others pointed to the importance of women’s presence in UN peacekeeping missions and peace negotiations because they are better able to communicate with women, know their needs and work to empower them: *“we have women who participated in peacekeeping forces and played an important role”*. Others said the safety of the homeland, society and family is linked to the safety of women, and *“as long as women are still suffering, these societies will continue losing their sense of peace and security.”*

### **In-depth interviews:**

In addition to the focus group discussions, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with a number of institutions concerned with gender equality, as well as a human rights activist, to gain an understanding of the nature of the efforts exerted in this regard and to identify gaps and challenges. A discussion guide was prepared to this end, as described in Annex 2, and the organizations that were interviewed are listed in Annex 3. The following analysis of these in-depth interviews is organized by institution.

#### **1- The Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women:**

The Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women (IMC) was established in Jordan in 2015 to coordinate, lead and ensure accountability on all matters related to women’s affairs in the various governmental sectors. It equally seeks to ensure that concerned authorities achieve their commitments in this regard, as stipulated in *Vision 2025* and other national plans and priorities. The IMC aims to consolidate and coordinate governmental efforts in the area of women’s empowerment in legislation, policies, programmes, plans, financing and institutional development, in order to avoid the duplication and waste of resources. It also aims to provide political support for the implementation of strategies, operational plans and measures related to women’s empowerment by providing data and information on progress made towards their

implementation, and any other indicators related to the status of women within their responsibilities. The IMC also strives to contribute to Jordan's fulfilment of all of its international obligations while ensuring the political will to implement strategies and mechanisms to enhance the role and status of women and to safeguard their rights. The Committee is thus equally tasked with examining the compatibility of national legislation and policies with international commitments, including human rights treaties, the Sustainable Development Goals and other global priorities.

Reflecting efforts to reduce the gender gap, the IMC highlights that Jordan has risen six points on the SDG indicator for reforms that support gender equality. In terms of how the IMC has contributed to prioritizing women's rights and issues and guiding plans to improve performance, this was said to have come to fruition through the IMC's institutionalization, approval of the National Strategy for Women (2020–2025), and through the IMC's adoption of gender-inclusive policies to remove obstacles and hurdles impeding women's and men's rights. Through the establishment of a Special Ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and adoption of the National Framework for the Protection of the Family Against Violence as a reference document, institutions have been obliged to fulfil the roles assigned to them. A guide has also been prepared outlining the measures taken by those concerned in the Ministry of the Interior and a number of administrative governors have been trained on this guide. Also, an interactive platform has been developed through an electronic dashboard to build a holistic view of achievements in the field of gender equality and to assess national achievements and efforts in this respect, which serves to develop appropriate procedures and better define priorities.

Work has also been done to include the concept of gender in the current training programmes of the Institute of Public Administration, based on the results of institutional analysis from a gender perspective, implemented in a number of ministries and governmental departments. In addition, a Committee to Support Women in Elections has been set up to support and train women, in cooperation with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and UN Women, to ensure the participation of all women in the upcoming elections, as candidates and electors.

The IMC points out that it also follows up on national strategies to ensure the inclusion of gender in policies and the achievement of justice and gender equality through recommendations, monitoring implementation and ensuring political will. It formed a national team headed by the JNCW, with the membership of the Institute of Public Administration, the Civil Service Bureau and the Institutional Performance and Policy Development Unit. A gender mainstreaming policy has been circulated to the ministries and the JNCW is tasked with monitoring its implementation, under IMC supervision,

including through an annual report on its implementation, which is submitted to the Prime Minister.

The IMC considers that the gender gap in Jordan is widening due to harmful notions of masculinity, stereotyping of women's roles and women's low economic participation. As for the desired results of the work of the IMC, they include: bridging the gender gap, placing women's issues on the list of priorities of the Jordanian Government and ensuring their incorporation into all programmes and projects on the ground, contributing to the adoption of a gender inclusion policy within all governmental institutions.

## **2- Jordanian National Commission for Women:**

The JNCW is the national mechanism for the advancement of the status of women in Jordan and its work is focused on ensuring the development of policies, strategies, programmes and budgets that are responsive to the needs of women by enabling other bodies to include gender in their policies, programmes and work in general. The JNCW can be considered an engine for concerned bodies, particularly governmental bodies, working towards gender equality. It monitors violations and discrimination against women and prepares national and international reports on the status of women. It also mobilizes for women's rights and guarantees to achieve the desired changes need to close the gender gap and create an environment that enhances the role of women in society and in the family. Jordan's vision to promote and achieve gender equality is found in the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020–2025), which the JNCW spearheaded by developing a road map and leading broad national consultations, in line with national plans, undertakings and international commitments.

As for Jordan's commitment to follow up on the recommendations of international conventions such as CEDAW, at the level of the official discourse there is a commitment, but reports continue to show that Jordan is one of the worst-ranked countries in the world in terms of the pursuit of gender equality in some areas. For example, although Jordan has committed to raising women's political participation to 30% at various decision-making levels, this has not yet been achieved, nor has its commitment to raising women's participation in the labour market to 25% by 2025. Women's economic participation is still low and has generally hovered in the past few years at around 14%. Many of Jordan's national and international commitments on gender equality have not been achieved yet. At the same time, Jordan is making efforts to meet its commitments by incorporating the SDGs, including objectives and indicators related to the empowerment of women and girls, into its national action plans and commitments. But the implementation of its international obligations is still below expectations.

According to the JNCW, the causes of the widening gender gap in Jordan include negative social norms that reflect the male-dominated culture and social roles of women and men – especially when some decision-makers echo this culture and reflect it in national policies and institutions, which leads to its reproduction and perpetuation for generations to come. This also applies to educational policies that perpetuate this negative culture and lead to the stereotyping of the roles of men and women in the family and society. As such, transformational change may require critical thinking about how to change the foundations of the educational system and curricula (whether for formal or informal learning), the development of teachers' skills, and encouraging positive societal attitudes that are supportive of gender equality. Jordan has almost closed the gender gap in education, quantitatively. On the other hand, media are an important source of information and the formation of culture and societal values, and therefore work must be done to develop gender-sensitive media programmes and special programmes that reflect the different issues and roles of women in society. In addition, local religious and political leaders, and even informal institutions such as clans and families, can play a significant role in closing the gender gap and supporting positive trends and practices. Thus, various entities are involving these leaders to promote positive attitudes around women's and men's roles and to combat negative perceptions that discriminate against women, whether it is at the level of decision-makers, institutions or local communities.

Even before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jordan had faced successive migration crises brought on by regional instability, when women's issues were sometimes not seen as a priority, although the lack of equality and discrimination against women leads to slower recovery from these crises. However, gender equality is a national issue and a priority according to official political will, so it must be pursued regardless of personal attitudes about its necessity. According to the JNCW, in order to resolve this dithering about the importance of achieving gender equality, action must be institutionalized to ensure its sustainability. This can be done through the development of policies, not only to change institutional culture, but also to monitor institutional performance and the extent to which commitment to work to achieve gender equality is realized as a national priority goal. In other words, systems to establish oversight and accountability for performance are needed to assess the degree to which it has been achieved.

In terms of how to implement the National Strategy for Women in Jordan, the JNCW, in cooperation with the concerned authorities – especially the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) and UN Women in Jordan – will first integrate the indicators of the Strategy into the operational plans and programmes of governmental institutions, including in the Government's Executive Programme for the coming years. A team has been set up to manage the integration process and develop the operational plans of the National Strategy for Women, headed by the Secretary-General of the JNCW

and the Secretary-General of MoPIC, in line with the recommendations of the IMC. The group will also follow up on ensuring the allocation of the necessary resources and identifying gaps in funding and guidance to ensure the implementation of the objectives of the Strategy. Work has begun on the design of the monitoring, evaluation and tracking system for financial resources, for the implementation of the objectives and for the indicators of the strategy, in cooperation with the World Bank and MoPIC.

With respect to the evaluation of gender units, it is part of the plan of action for the implementation of the Government's gender mainstreaming policy, where a preliminary report will be prepared to indicate the status, functions, powers and position of gender units and officers within the administrative structure of ministries. The goal is to develop the necessary recommendations to enable these units to perform their functions and ensure that they are directly linked to the highest decision-making levels in governmental institutions (such as the minister or the secretary-general of the ministry) to enable them to actively participate in decisions related to the development of gender-responsive policies and the allocation of the budgets needed to implement them.

In terms of networking with civil society organizations to build a community-based culture that is supportive of gender equality, the JNCW believes in partnership and the need for a broad dialogue and frameworks that bring together all voices, experiences and efforts to achieve gender equality, especially from civil society. The JNCW has thus established numerous networks and alliances with civil society organizations to carry out joint campaigns aimed at mobilizing and lobbying for change.

### **3- The National Council for Family Affairs:**

The policies and strategies of the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) to achieve SDG 5 are aimed at all members of the family without any discrimination between females and males. They seek to identify the needs of families by pinpointing the most important problems they face, whether related to childhood, to the services provided or to adopted policy and legislation, thus proposing amendments. Qualitative research carried out by the NCFA to ascertain priority family problems revealed that the family counselling service was not available. So, the NCFA qualified a number of associations to provide family counselling services after preparing a dedicated training manual. A new report on family problems will also be issued to cover all areas of life. The NCFA played a significant role in influencing the amendment of Article 62 of the Penal Code, on granting mothers the right to consent to surgical procedures and administer medical treatment for children (previously the exclusive right of fathers).

To combat discrimination against the elderly, the NCFA conducted a comparative analytical study on "The Reality of the Elderly in Jordan" in 2017 and developed a Strategy for Older Persons in 2018, which was recently evaluated. Although Jordanian society

places high value on older persons, there is nevertheless a lack of services, in particular home care services for old persons in the governmental sector, which comes at a high cost in the private sector, and there is a need for geriatric specialties. According to the NCFA, there is absolutely no gender discrimination in service-delivery.

In reference to the unified national procedures for the prevention and response to situations of violence in Jordan, an integrated structure has been in place to reduce domestic violence since 1997, and a national framework clarifies the roles and responsibilities of national institutions under the Domestic Violence Act of 2017, including the internal procedures of institutions and the system of services available in civil society and governmental organizations. There is a challenge at the level of prevention, although national policies state that all sectors must work together on prevention in order to avoid an increase in cases of violence. Still, there is a problem in the application of procedures and a shortage of service-providers. This is due to a number of reasons, including: the lack of psychologists in the Family and Juvenile Protection Department and a shortage of social workers in this area. The work environment is considered repellant because they encounter risks during their visits and follow-up, sometimes being cursed at and not allowed to enter homes. So, according to the NCFA, these professionals need to be rewarded with some incentives, to ensure that they have the passion for their work, and that they have the mindset to reject violence, *“as encouraging violence is a behaviour that exists in some of these service-providers, as they are part and parcel of the society after all.”*

There are also challenges when it comes to reporting, as even service-providers are sometimes reluctant to report violence even though the law obliges them and punishes them for their failure not to do so and *“the Family and Juvenile Protection Department must act to respond even if the victim is a sane adult over the age of 18”*. Moreover, the witness protection system has not yet been set up, which may have an adverse impact. Filing a complaint is optional, however if there is a felony, the matter becomes part of the official procedure. When children are involved, it is mandatory for a case to be filed. A Complaints Tracking System has been in operation since 2016 and is currently being implemented by the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, Al-Bashir Hospital, four schools and Dar Al-Wefaq (the Al-Wefaq Home). In this system, reporting and responses to cases are followed up on, and all cases of domestic violence entered into this system are transferred. When the system is rolled out, all service-providers will report through the system. The completion of this system needs funding, and it has been rejected by some service-providers who say they do not know how to use it. There are also demands for the appointment of more psychologists.

Regarding child marriage, it was pointed out that under the amended Personal Status Act approved by Parliament, marriage for those who have reached the age of 16 is permitted

in “special cases”, subject to the consent of the Supreme Judge, and if the marriage was a “necessity” based on an “interest”, and that consent and choice are checked by the Supreme Judge. With regard to the commitment of the Supreme Judges Department to these instructions, the high number of child marriages permitted still reflects a lack of full compliance. According to the NCFA respondent, even if Jordan were to enact a law like that of Morocco or Egypt, which sets the age for marriage at 18 with no exceptions, this would nevertheless risk increasing cases of customary marriages, thus resulting in a shift away from registered marriage with legal rights towards a marriage without any rights. The Supreme Judges Department is also aware that child marriage is higher in areas with high poverty. Following up on the plan to combat child marriage has become the responsibility of the NCFA. A Committee of concerned institutions has also been working on this and a report on what has been done has been sent to the Prime Minister. According to the NCFA, cultural change must be worked on and school truancy must be tackled, as most marriages are for girls who have dropped out of school. With respect to the divorce of minors, the NCFA respondent pointed out that there is a problem that happens when a marriage is registered before the wedding night, as divorces occurring before the wedding night have increased. Accordingly, work must be done to change cultural practices to postpone the official registration of a marriage contract from the engagement period till the day before wedding night.

#### **4- The Family and Juvenile Protection Department:**

Respondents with the Family and Juvenile Protection Department (FJPD) of the Directorate of Public Security said their services are gender-sensitive because they are non-discriminatory and provided to all recipients, regardless of race, religion, creed or gender, and because the applicable policies are devoid of any discrimination. They added that training and procedural evidence is made nationally compatible by the National Team/NCFA, and each case is handled according to the methodology described in the National Framework for Family Protection. The FJPD has established rules in place for conducting interviews with survivors of domestic violence. One of the most important of these principles is the confidentiality and privacy of cases. To achieve this, the Department provides special rooms to interview women and survivors should be interviewed by a trained a qualified individual of their own gender. Moreover, the survivors’ psychological state should not be overlooked; an appropriate time must be adhered to for the interview; and a step-by-step approach should be taken. A survivor should be interviewed by a single investigator, using specialized translators if necessary. Interviewers are trained on gender sensitivity and impartiality, and three Department officials have been certified as National Gender-Based Violence Trainers. There is cooperation with national and international partners in the area of capacity-building and training and the Ministry of Higher Education has approved the FJPD’s 320-hour Training Diploma on the protection of women and children at its Regional Training Centre. Victim-blaming is prohibited, especially for women who have been harassed.

When providing services to survivors of domestic or sexual violence (male or female) in different age groups, special consideration is given to cases involving persons with disabilities, particularly in the language used. There are also mechanisms in place to monitor cases involving elderly persons, especially violence against wives and mothers, and to research the extent of violence against elderly people. Having women within the Department's cadre of service-providers is essential, especially at the early stages when abuse is reported. A group of male and female staff have been trained as gender officers, and an officer who is structurally linked to the Director of the Department has been appointed to advise and review the services provided from a gender perspective. The objectives of training and capacity-building are knowledge, skills and practices, although the latter objective (practices) is challenging, especially when it requires changing the acquired subculture and developing communication skills. For example, while staff members are trained on the issue of "informed consent", under the established methodology, each staff member may explain it differently, which may not help the survivor to understand the purpose, or may lead it to be misunderstood, which could ultimately result in the survivor deciding not to make a report. Thus, the FJPD sees a need to develop communication skills in order to increase professionalism.

With respect to the settlement of family disputes, the challenge is societal acceptance of the new Domestic Violence Protection Act. The concept of the settlement is related to administrative procedures and work is needed to increase awareness and clarify that the settlement mechanism is a right enshrined in the law. Moreover, recurrence and risk are both legal impediments to the procedure, *as "the settlement mechanism promotes consensual and restorative justice approaches"*. The Crime Prevention Law is sometimes invoked in cases where a victim does not wish to file a judicial or administrative complaint in the face of a personal risk. To help with coordinating efforts, the FJPD says there is a need for a road map of service-providers, detailing the nature and location of services, and in order to improve the alignment between needs and the services provided.

In order to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence, an emergency number (911) has been created to receive complaints, with a computerized reporting system that ensures accountability and monitors the response time between reports and measures taken. In the next phase, it will be linked directly to the FJPD, within the mechanisms adopted by the Department to receive reports and complaints that include: social media, an interactive Facebook page, a WhatsApp number (0797911911), in addition to around-the-clock in-person assistance in the Department's various field sections (whose addresses and locations were posted on Google as part of an outreach programme to facilitate access).

Feedback from the recipients of FJPD services is monitored by the Department's three teams working to measure the time the service was received, including complaints boxes with a guiding list in all departments to improve the service. However, there are gaps in the available statistics on cases of domestic violence. The Department's annual criminal report contains the number of complaints that have been referred to the courts, but it excludes cases handled through community service sentences or those referred to administrative governors.

However, given the importance of data for decision-making, the Department has paid particular attention to developing Statistical Analysis Systems to help provide decision-makers with evidence-based information, including on the root causes of violence and delinquency. In reference to monitoring family issues, a computerized system for follow-up is used, which includes a tool for monitoring home visits, a program to help to accurately identify the location, and electronic reminders of follow-up visits.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of domestic violence have increased, and the pandemic itself has affected several areas, including FJPD awareness and education programmes. Their remote implementation, as well as training programmes, were not very efficient, and there have been logistical challenges to the continuity of social, psychosocial and legal service-provision which were running at anywhere from 0 to 50% capacity during the lockdown. As for referrals to shelters for survivors of violence, they were easier and more flexible and shelter services provided in 2020 were actually higher than in 2019.

#### **5- The Higher Population Council:**

In terms of the policies and strategies established by the Higher Population Council to achieve SDG 5, the Council has taken an interest in integrating a gender perspective within strategic plans, which include several SDGs and indicators. Gender equality has also been reflected in a dedicated pillar on gender equality and women's economic empowerment in Demographic Dividend Policy Document and the National Population Strategy (2021–2030) and the National Strategy for Reproductive and Sexual Health (2020–2030), which covers all age groups. Work is also currently underway on the National Plan to follow up on Jordan's commitments to the Nairobi Summit 25+ Programme of Action on Population and Development, on ending maternal mortality, unmet needs for family planning, and preventing domestic violence. A policy paper on the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality by ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights was also recently issued.

The National Population Strategy (2021–2030), in its women and youth pillar, includes SDG 5 indicators: the percentage of youth and female participation in the labour

market, access to reproductive health services, the incidence of gender-based violence, and the percentage of boys, girls, women and men with knowledge of and positive behaviours towards gender equality. Regarding the challenges for implementing these indicators, there are indicators that cannot be measured in Jordan due to a lack of data at subnational levels. Moreover, those working on these topics sometimes use different data and indicators. Some surveys cover a five-year period, such as the Population and Family Health Survey, while there is a 10-year span for the General Population and Housing Census, and reproductive health and women's indicators are based on these results. There is also no uniform way to compile information and collect data.

With regard to the Council's follow-up on child marriage, it carried out a national study and submitted a summary of policy recommendations to the Government. The Higher Population Council prepared a national plan to reduce the marriage of minors (under the age of 18) in Jordan for the years of (2018–2022) which was adopted by the Cabinet and circulated to relevant institutions. Its implementation is currently being followed up on by the NCFA. Intensive awareness-raising programmes have also been implemented at the provincial level. However, the rates of child marriage have been fluctuating since 2018. There is close cooperation between the Higher Population Council and the Supreme Judges Department at every step in the preparation of any study or development of any policy, also involving all stakeholders. The Council also relies on the index of marriage contracts issued by the Supreme Judges Department. However, a study is needed to determine the degree to which the regulations on exceptions for the marriage of minors are being applied and the reasons for the high numbers.

HPC has been working on calculating the demographic dividend, using population data collected for five age groups. According to estimates, the number of people aged 15–64 who are active in the workforce will have reached two-thirds of the population in 2040, reducing Jordan's dependency ratio. However, this will require family planning policies to reduce fertility to a replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman – currently the fertility rate is 2.7 children/woman. It also requires the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring health care for women, men, young women and young men, and staff that are qualified to provide services, including social protection policies with health insurance, educational policies to meet the needs of the labour market, strengthened vocational training and orientation, technical education and self-employment, and policies to provide employment opportunities and increase women's economic participation. The Higher Population Council is also preparing monitoring and follow-up reports to track achievements on population-related indicators and identify remaining obstacles and gaps.

In connection with Jordan's commitment to implement the recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) on women's

empowerment, reproductive health and sexual health for young people and adolescents, the ICPD/Cairo recommendations have one of the main reference points for the development of the National Strategy on Reproductive and Sexual Health and the National Population Strategy. As these focus on young people, and young people represent about 36% of Jordan's population, they need specialized sexual and reproductive health services, which are not currently available from the Ministry of Health. A summary of policies for providing youth-friendly reproductive health services was produced in 2017 and was approved by the Government. National standards for youth-friendly reproductive health services were also designed based on WHO standards. Currently, these are used as standards of application and qualification in some centres of the Family Health Care Institute. An online platform for reproductive health information for young people is also being developed, and several policy summaries and studies on promoting reproductive health services and on women's empowerment have been prepared.

#### **6- The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:**

The policies of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are highly sensitive to gender, as women with disabilities face many challenges at different levels, both legislative and practical. However, the plans and strategies of some of the bodies that are active on women's rights and policymaking do not include women with disabilities. The reports of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are gender-balanced; better yet, they tend to favour females, and more than 60% of its staff (at the management level) and 50% of its Board members are female. Regarding policies and measures, there are indicators linked to the SDGs, in particular Goal 5, and tools and indicators to measure the Council's commitment and alignment with all SDGs are currently being worked on.

According to the respondent from the Council, domestic violence is the greatest challenge for women; it becomes a double challenge for those with disabilities; and it increases even more in cases of poverty. Women with disabilities are subjected to various forms of violence, including physical abuse and denial of access to education or work because of stigma: *"they are afraid that if she has brothers and sisters that they will never get married because one of them is a disabled person"*. There is discrimination in mobility as we rarely see a woman with a disability walking alone on the streets, because she is vulnerable to unwanted physical contact under the pretext of assisting her. A few cases of indecent acts have been investigated under the guise of assistance, so many of women and girls with disabilities do not go out and avoid public transportation, which brings a greater financial burden with it when they have to use taxis to move around.

Concerning reproductive health, the respondent said some women and girls with disabilities face legal offences such as hysterectomy or forced sterilization. It is a

procedure often requested by parents, with the cooperation of some doctors to protect these women and girls from pregnancy in case of rape or to eliminate the suffering of their menstrual cycle. The Fatwa Department has played a strong role in this context, as a fatwa (edict) has been issued stating that an absolute hysterectomy is permissible only if there is a medical justification for it. The Council has held a series of meetings and focus group discussions to mobilize and raise awareness, but the subject cannot be fully controlled because it is sometimes hidden by or from parents and doctors. Reproductive health services in the public sector are not inclusive of women with disabilities, both married and unmarried, and a memorandum of understanding has been forged with the Family Health Care Institute to integrate them into comprehensive service-delivery.

According to the Council respondent, more work must be done to change negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, focusing on the next generation and youth, and to change approaches focused on charity and good will, to get children to understand that this is merely human diversity. More work also needs to be done to provide structure, services and specialized education such as braille voice-readers. Service-providers must be trained in sign language, and the services, culture and skills of these entities must be sensitive to persons with disabilities, as they play a key role in improving conditions.

The 2017 Law on Persons with Disabilities introduced important provisions; however, according to the respondent, no matter how ideal a law, it will not be applied effectively as long as policymakers and service-providers hold or promote beliefs about the inferiority of women, such as condoning marital rape or domestic violence. In reference to the State's responsibility to persons with disabilities, the Council believes considerable efforts are needed. A recent collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development on the Alternative Accommodations Bylaw seeks to provide alternative services to those hosted in shelters through services to support their independent living and daily life skills. This will help parents, especially those who cannot afford private domestic services. This subject has high priority as a contribution of the State to persons with disabilities, and it is the practice in many countries. Individual attempts to provide care and rehabilitation services have been tried in some governorates, but these have not been part of a widespread or coordinated effort, and what is needed is an institutionalized system.

The Council promotes the participation of persons with disabilities, especially girls, in the labour market by carrying out campaigns and holding meetings with the private sector. Some companies – such as telecommunications, transportation and factories – are asking the Council to assess the available infrastructure in preparation for hiring persons with disabilities in communications, programming and accounting services, according to their qualifications and experience. The reason for this trend is a code of ethical conduct for large companies and the existence of gender and disability-specific standards that

they must abide by and adhere to. This has given rise to a kind of positive incentive, because the Council strengthens the image of complying companies and honours them, and this contributes to their media visibility. There are also employment and networking associations for people with disabilities, ensuring decent work that respects their labour rights. People with disabilities must also naturally make an effort to prove and improve their skills. Regarding discrimination in the labour market against women and men with disabilities, it should be noted that some employers, especially in the private sector, fear employing persons with disabilities, especially if the applicant is a woman, as she may get pregnant or they may worry that she cannot do the work. Also, the choices for women are limited *“because not every possible workplace is accepting, as is the case with women without disabilities”*. They may also be more afraid of being subjected to acts of public indecency than others, as *“cases of harassment have been reported, but they remain silent for fear of not being believed or for fear of losing their jobs”*.

### **7- The Ministry of Health:**

The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health (2018–2022) emphasizes the need for equality between workers regardless of gender or race. The vision of Jordan’s National Health Human Resources Strategy (2016–2020) includes providing an adequate, qualified and responsive health workforce to maximize the performance of Jordan’s health system in reaching universal health-care coverage and sustainable development goals. Meanwhile, the National Strategy of the Forum for Women Leaders in the Health Sector (2019–2022) contributes to improving the legislative environment by strengthening governance, policies and capacities, winning approval, networking and guidance, and promoting institutionalization and sustainability. There is also new willingness to appoint women directors and secretaries-general in the Ministry’s Directorate of Health Insurance and Health Care, as the Secretary-General is now a woman and the Assistant Secretary-General for finance and administration is also a woman, which may help to guide policies to be more gender-responsive. The Gender Officer of the Ministry of Health also follows up on gender equality recommendations and incorporates them into the Ministry’s plans and strategies.

The Ministry of Health has a focus on maternal and child services, offering free prenatal, postpartum, and early childhood (under age 5) care programmes. Manuals, protocols and educational materials are available on reproductive health and family planning, as well as on the services and programmes available for young men and women. There are no specialized services targeting girls and boys in particular. An evaluation of a previous experience in a health centre showed that the turnout of young men and women was low, so the service was cancelled. Girls prefer to visit primary health-care centres rather than maternity centres and if any girl has a problem, she can see the family doctor or gynecologist at the Comprehensive Health Centre. A section for the elderly within the

Ministry, which was funded by the WHO was also discontinued, and menopause and menstrual cycle services were introduced, but did not continue. In comprehensive health centres, patients with chronic diseases are taken care of, regularly examined and given medication for months. There are no psychiatric services specifically for the elderly, as any family doctor can refer any patient to mental health services.

Regarding programmes to prevent violence against women (physical, sexual and psychological), there is a specialized section working on domestic violence issues within the Directorate of Women's and Children's Health in partnership with organizations such as UNFPA and UNICEF. Domestic violence is investigated in most health centres and governmental hospitals, as well as in maternity and children's services. A pregnant woman's file contains questions to spot violence. There are also referrals to the Family Protection Committee located in the centre or hospital. Laws and regulations have made reporting mandatory if a female is under 18 years of age, or for cases of sexual violence and death threats (against anyone of any age). Otherwise, the respondent pointed out that if a woman is older than 18, reporting domestic violence or abuse is entirely her decision. There are also training courses for health personnel and doctors on early detection and treatment of sexual violence and rape, and KIT-3 is currently being used, which carries 72-hour emergency contraceptives and medicine to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

As for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the respondent made reference to its direct effect on women's health, prenatal and postpartum services, as well as on family planning, in particular by affecting the insertion of IUDs. In terms of other means of contraception, women were provided with a sufficient supply for three months. In some centres, maternity and children's services were provided over the Internet. Midwives were trained to communicate with women online. However, this experiment was limited and not disseminated across the board. There was telephone communication in some governorates. On the other hand, the pandemic had a positive effect on breastfeeding, as the Defense Act gave mothers the opportunity to work remotely, which has been good for nursing mothers, pregnant women and women in the postpartum period.

#### **8- The Ministry of Social Development:**

The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) that is currently in force (2017–2021) is gender-responsive at the level of operational action plans and follow-up and evaluation indicators. In addition, clear foundations have been established for appointments to leadership positions, and a balanced employment policy characterized by transparency and equal opportunities for both sexes has been applied. According to the MoSD respondent, practices are applied fairly and equitably, and without discrimination and differentiation. A gender policy has been developed that ensures the Ministry's

commitment to integrating and promoting equal opportunities, through gender inclusion in all of the Ministry's work. A gender policy mechanism has also been prepared based on an institutional analysis of human resources and service recipients. MoSD was the first Ministry to prepare a gender policy since guidance was issued by the Ministry's Planning Committee in 2020 to include gender into all the Ministry's processes. This was done with the Strategic Plan, legislation, policies to ensure the satisfaction of service recipients, and in the Ministry's budget – with all processes analysed to ensure their gender-responsiveness. The Ministry is currently in the process of updating its existing strategic plan from a gender perspective, and it has been agreed that all goals will be responsive. Gender equality and equal opportunities have been included as institutional values of the Ministry; a manual for follow-up and evaluation from a gender perspective has been prepared in the Ministry; and all follow-up and evaluation officers have been trained on its use within the administrative units of the Ministry.

MoSD is working to take gender into thorough account in its programmes provided to poor families as part of its unrelenting efforts to combat poverty, especially among women, by creating funding windows for small projects through the Productive Families Programme. MoSD is also providing training and rehabilitation for women in communities, to build their project-management capacities, including on preparing economic feasibility studies for their small businesses and helping them find marketing windows, through the establishment of marketing exhibitions. However, there is an urgent need to find a permanent sales centre to ensure continued income-generating for the family and to fight poverty. Within the framework of poverty-reduction policies and strategies, MoSD works to achieve a decent life for poor families within the “Buildings and Housing Programme”, which provides decent housing and creates a living environment that is compatible with health, family stability and human rights. The elderly, widows and the families of persons with disabilities are given priority, and the Ministry has taken care to ensure that these homes are situated within population centres, close to health, educational and economic services, water and sanitation, electricity grids and/or sustainable solar power. It also works to ensure that they are free from marginalization or social stigmatization, and in full legal compliance with human rights requirements, especially regarding children and persons with disabilities. Women represent more than one third of all beneficiaries under this programme.

The Care and Social Protection Programmes for women, which are part of the empowerment pillar of the National Social Protection Strategy (2019–2025), include an indicator on the number of women benefiting from the services provided through community-based development centres. Programmes targeted at women and girls in community development centres include: awareness and education programmes for groups aged 13 and over, including psychosocial support, basic life skills, parental

awareness, violence, gender-based violence, bullying, training programmes (sewing, beauty, maintenance, handicrafts), as well as funding programmes (credit funds). The Ministry provides care, protection, temporary shelter and recovery programmes for women, men and children survivors of human trafficking. Women survivors are received at the Ministry's Karamah (Dignity) House. Survivors are exempted from medical report fees. They are followed up on through case record data forms from the time the survivor enters the house until she departs. A Department for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking has also been established in the Ministry. Inmates at the Women's Reform and Rehabilitation Centre can benefit from the services of the Inmates' Children Care Home, for their children up to the age of 3. There is a study underway to develop the services provided to women inmates. The number of inmates is monitored to ensure that they receive frequent and emergency cash assistance, in-kind relief, physical rehabilitation services, health insurance, institutional care, family relations, vocational qualification and awareness-raising lectures through social service offices.

On the subject of care for older persons in care homes and shelters, the MoSD responded noted that there were no state hospices for elderly persons, but there is no gender discrimination for the beneficiaries of services (both male and female) under purchase agreements. There is a system to study the social situation of beggars through the Directorate for Combating Vagrancy, which provides health and shelter services, psychosocial and legal support, training and qualifications for particular professions, in cooperation with civil society organizations. Poverty reduction, productivity enhancement and skills transfer programmes are provided and linked to the National Aid Fund. However, the majority of beggars are female and their numbers increase according to the seasons, especially during Ramadan.

In order to empower women in the local community, there are awareness-raising programmes targeting women and girls on all social phenomena, such as child marriage, drugs, extremism and terrorism, reproductive health, breast cancer, parental awareness, violence, gender-based violence, and the 16 Days campaign to end violence against women. The respondent emphasized that all of these awareness programmes take into thorough account the gender of recipients. MoSD's Directorate of Communication and Media transmits messages on human dignity and human rights and has its own gender-responsive plan.

#### **9- The Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs:**

The Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA) is working to satisfy both Jordan's national and international commitments, both on sustainable development and to comply with international conventions, to increase the participation rate of women. The focus is now on increasing this rate in local elected councils (municipal and

decentralized). To contribute to women's participation in politics, the IMC is working to achieve equality in the public sector. It has built a database of more than 60 indicators targeting women in decision-making positions. It is also aimed at monitoring women's political participation rates. This database is being launched on the website of the Cabinet and is currently in the process of disseminating its data. These indicators relate to women in decision-making settings, such as women ambassadors, independent bodies and public institutions, such as the Aviation Authority and the Civil Service Bureau, all in response to SDG 5 on gender equality. The **Royal** Committee to Modernize the Political System calls for an increase women's participation in politics rate to 30% and requests the support of the Ministry to help raise awareness.

MoPPA's strategy for 2021–2025 includes several training programmes and workshops on women's political empowerment and awareness-raising on the laws and legislation governing political life. MoPPA has worked on increasing awareness of the reforms in the Electoral Law in 2020, and in the coming period they will focus on increasing awareness around the Local Administration Law, which includes Municipalities and Decentralization, the awareness of groups wishing to participate in politics, and offer governance programmes and capacity-building for female parliamentarians on how to deal with the media. The Ministry is working on these programmes to empower women politically and to enable them to reach decision-making positions. The most important aspect of the Local Administration Law to be adopted, is the creation of an Institute for training municipal and decentralization members (both men and women). As for efforts to improve the appointment process, there will be representation from the trade unions and institutions active in each governorate, but it is more important to increase the representation of women in elected councils and to build their capacity to reach at least 30% by appointment or election.

Touching on the challenges faced by the decentralization experiment, the MoPPA respondent said it has lacked logistical support and needed more time before it was applied, such as being piloted in certain governorates before being applied to the rest, or being implemented in another form, such as elected councils with elected representatives. In terms of appointments, more female representation and legal and economic expertise are needed among appointees, whether from women or men. In addition, there are gaps in the law in terms of overlap between the work of municipalities and provincial councils. The Ministry is currently working to address these gaps so that respective roles are clear, so that decentralization members are removed from their parliamentary and legislative roles and can exclusively focus on being of service in their germane roles. The new law will clarify all of these details so that the roles are clear-cut. The administrative level of decentralization must be also be clarified, through the Council of Representatives and Municipalities, in whatever form the organizational structure the Jordanian State generally takes. There

are cultural and societal challenges related to society's perceptions of women's roles and its expectations that their role be an extension of their role in the family. Women face difficulties the second they reach the provincial councils and they are not given the opportunity to make decisions, which are predominantly made by male members.

In terms of MoPPA's actions to enhance the role of women in political parties and decision-making positions, the Ministry has relied heavily on the financial contribution system, as a party will receive financial support only if it has women nominated for local, municipal, decentralized or parliamentary elections. If these women succeed, the party will receive support and the greater their qualitative roles, the more support a party will receive. A gender-sensitive communication plan aimed at promoting women's participation in political life had been used in past elections and will be used in future elections. As for the prevailing negative societal view of party affiliation and participation, its legacy goes back to the idea of parties in the 1980s. Although party membership has increased in Jordan, stereotypes run high, especially among university youth, and in particular among those who have earned an army scholarship for their university studies. There is still a fear of joining parties, and it is necessary to work on three pillars combined – namely citizens themselves, the party and the State – and to work in partnership to pave the way for women and men to engage in organized work and teamwork. The percentage of women registered in parties is estimated to be more than one third, and there are also young people and the elderly who are affiliated with different parties.

One of the most significant challenges and difficulties for women's political participation is economic empowerment and financial independence. There are cases of individuals who have lost their jobs after being unsuccessful in their election bids. A proposed amendment to the law would enable those who have not won election to return to their previous jobs, which would be an encouragement in and of itself, and particularly affect women's willingness to take a chance on candidacy.

When assessing the experiences of the quota and its impact on women's political participation, MoPPA finds that the quota, although not perfect, has contributed to the presence of women in elections and to their access to the House of Representatives: *“the quota experiment is a good thing with a positive distinction, although it needs to be reconsidered in some governorates, such as Amman, Zarqa and Irbid; but if this quota system is done away with, no woman will be able to reach the Parliament”*. No women in the nineteenth session of the House of Representatives won their seat competitively because of the coronavirus pandemic, as the percentage of women voting decreased even though the percentage of women candidates was higher. Furthermore, men's understanding of the law were clearer in the second cycle than in 2016. In the parliamentary elections for the nineteenth House of Representatives, awareness and understanding of the great role

of women emerged, and some men stopped giving votes to women within the list for fear of women winning the seat(s) and being in direct competition with them, with the strategy being: *“give her votes to a certain degree, but then cease”, and “those are the tactics of candidates”*. The challenges women face in internal clan elections were also clear, as most of the nominations and votes went to men, and many women faced challenges in being admitted to men’s lists.

#### 10- **The Ministry of Labour:**

Although the actions of the Ministry of Labour (MoL) include both sexes, and there is a Women’s Affairs Directorate that is working to make recommendations to reduce the problems and challenges for women’s entry into and withdrawal from the labour market by building partnerships with national and international bodies to guide women into new sectors. The challenges have increased with the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing the family burden on women, amid remote work and distance education, as women are the main components of the care sector. One of MoL’s actions to reduce unemployment among women is its continued support for the Satellite Project aimed at women and men in the garment industry, where the percentage of women enrolled is high due to the opening of production branches for projects located in qualified industrial areas. However, its focus on more traditional (garment sector) areas of work are considered stereotypical and working conditions in Jordan face many challenges. Even though the percentage of women in education is high, the Jordanian labour market remains unprepared to support the entry of more qualified women. Women need wages that are commensurate with the costs of leaving her home and joining the labour market; they need safe transport, nurseries and working hours that can be reconciled with their family responsibilities. The Jordanian labour market therefore remains unattractive to women, which is evidenced by the fact that women’s participation rate is still below expectations.

According to MoL, one of the most important practices of discrimination against women in the private and informal sector is wage discrimination between women and men. Women continue to work in low-paid jobs. There are no monitoring mechanisms and an inspection team is responsible for most of the oversight according to the articles of the Labour Code. Almost one third of the inspection staff were women, for privacy reasons, and as most of the labour complaints were in the education sector. The Ministry worked with the National Commission for Wage Equity, through the “Stand up with the Teacher” campaign, which is still in the process of being institutionalized, to urge some kind of regulation of the education sector, to enforce existing labour laws and raise awareness of women’s rights, since women suffer from legal illiteracy and harassment cases are not received because they are not covered by existing laws. The Ministry is concerned with the subject of gender, women’s work and gender policies such as flexible work, wage equity, gender equity in the workplace and the mandatory electronic transfer of wages

for teachers working in the private sector. There has been no official study on the flexible work system and its impact on women's economic participation although a study has established the usefulness of flexible work practices.

There is a partnership between the Ministry of Labour and trade unions, but women are poorly represented in trade unions, and the number of powerful unions is low, and they are unable to obtain the rights of women workers or to negotiate collective agreements. With regard to nurseries and their impact on women's continuity in the labour market, the 2021 Alternatives to Institutional Nurseries Directive was recently issued. Its instructions apply to institutions that employ at least 15 workers whose children are not older than the age specified under the Nurseries Bylaw. Alternatives to institutional nurseries are also available to the employer. The employer can enter into a contract with nurseries in multiple geographical areas and the worker has the right to choose the appropriate nursery, provided that the employer contributes at least 30 to 50 dinars, depending on the worker's monthly wage. The challenges of establishing nurseries remain substantial, whether it is the employer's responsibility under the applicable law, or that of the State, civil society or the family.

There is a section specialized in child labour, and employers must ensure adequate working conditions for any employed children aged 16 to 18 years of age, but girls usually work informally in homes and on farms. A national survey is required to determine the nature and extent of girls' employment and to ensure the rights of working children. A project funded by MoL is renewed annually through an MoU with the Hashemite Fund of Jordan to send children to the Social Support Centre for educational programmes, rehabilitation and their return to school or to vocational training. All inspection visits are conducted by an inspector from MoL and the Social Support Centre for the referral of cases. There is a mechanism for reporting child labour, with complaints received on a protection platform from the child himself/herself or his/her guardian, or through the website ([childlabour.jo](http://childlabour.jo)). Anyone in the community can also report, but there are challenges in correctly entering the information so that the Ministry can take action according to the law.

With respect to marginalized groups and refugee women, their participation in the labour market is weak, especially in the organized labour market. The instructions issued in the regulation of the labour market and in the Jordanian Response Plan to the Syrian crisis for the years 2020–2022 include promoting the participation of refugee women in the labour market, including through training, education and loans, and there are programmes that fully target women. Gender is also taken into thorough account in the response plan through the provision of humanitarian services to refugees, while economic empowerment is one of the sectors that falls within the functions and responsibilities of

MoL, and there are qualitative indicators on women's participation in the labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected workers (both female and male) who have lost jobs, especially in the education sector, and the most affected are women. A protection website has been created to receive complaints in a safe manner, and according to internal procedures for follow-up and oversight, and the site will continue to work until after the pandemic. The pandemic has also led to the discontinuation of the flexible working system, with the exception of remote work.

#### **11- The Social Security Corporation:**

The gender team of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) has worked on recommendations to increase female leadership in the institution, which has already increased at the senior leadership level, but there is no assessment to determine the impact of this increase on the policies of the institution. Clear foundations were established for competition for supervisory ranks between males and females, according to the team's recommendations. Gender-specific indicators are reflected in the annual and quarterly reports.

At the level of the insured (social security subscribers), more than one programme has been implemented to increase women's participation in the labour market, including the Maternity Insurance Fund, which was launched in 2011, and is aimed at increasing women's participation in the private sector in particular, as there is discrimination against women, especially if they are married. Specifically, small sectors terminate the services of pregnant workers as their due dates approach, thereby threatening their economic situation and bringing them into a state of job insecurity. The Social Security Act provides for the payment of their wages during their maternity leave and does not set a ceiling on the number of births that are covered by insurance. There is also a legislative amendment under the amended act, currently under consideration, that aims to introduce social protection programmes linked to maternity insurance. In addition, an Executive Management Bylaw was issued on applications for the accreditation of public nurseries in various governorates of the Kingdom, for the implementation of a care programme, and nurseries that are not covered by social security were encouraged to join retroactively and without further cost. The SSC's media centre also held a large number of dialogues with women's organizations in various governorates of the Kingdom and remote areas, aimed at raising women's awareness of their rights under the Social Security Law and at promoting their participation and continuity in the labour market.

Regarding the gender equality aspects of social security rights, the age of early retirement for both sexes is 50, and there are differences in compulsory retirement, as men must retire at the age of 60 and women at the age of 55, which supposedly takes into account women's circumstances and roles. According to the SSC respondent, everyone prefers compulsory retirement because the benefits are better. There is a distinction between

men's and women's pensions for their family, which are only granted to a woman if she proves that she is the breadwinner (women are not considered 'breadwinners' in the eyes of the law, unless they can prove otherwise – that there is no other income or financial support – which has an element of 'dignity discrimination'). There are also some gender gaps in inheritance for a single or married woman, because if she dies before her parents, husband, or children over the age of 25, they do not inherit her pension.

The Social Security Corporation has facilitated the subscriptions of non-working women as well as males in Jordan and abroad, through voluntary affiliations to receive early or compulsory pensions, as they have the same rights as employed subscribers, with the exception of work injuries. In the informal sector, there are many daunting challenges, as the SSC has undertaken the initiatives (such as Take the Initiative and Include Yourself) to give everyone, whether male or female, the opportunity to subscribe to social security. A project was also launched to expand the coverage of social security, which has strengthened the social protection of women, especially those working in small and micro enterprises, such as sewing workshops, beauty salons, clothing stores, pharmacies and various administrative areas, such as secretarial work in medical clinics, law firms, engineering offices, and others. This has contributed to the high rate of women being included within the social security umbrella. Additionally, the SSC has worked to increase the number of inspectors to meet the needs of institutions, especially small enterprises, as these entities were not covered and were trying to evade the SSC. An initiative is underway through a committee comprised of representatives from the SSC, MoPIC and the ILO, to come up with a plan to include the informal sector so that it would become a regulated sector under the umbrella of social security and to explicitly protect these groups in particular.

According to the SSC respondent, during the COVID-19 pandemic, more negative discrimination was observed against women, and the pandemic particularly affected women in the labour market. One of the decisions of the SSC was to assist women with nurseries, which included a lump sum given to working women with children. The lower their salary became, the greater the assistance they would get, up to a maximum of JOD 60, and the disbursement of such assistance was done directly to nurseries registered with SSC. Up to JOD 25 were disbursed for the children of mothers who were insured but in unlicensed nurseries. The Maternity Insurance Fund and the Hemayah Protection Programme are for women who participate in social security and will continue to operate after the pandemic. The Hemayah Programme, issued under Defense Order No. 14 of 2020, includes the provision of temporary salaries to workers in the tourism and transport sectors, who are social security subscribers, and to the children of the Gaza Strip and children of Jordanian women residing in the Kingdom, in order to support the job stability of workers in the two sectors and to protect their livelihoods.

## 12- The Department of Statistics:

The Department of Statistics (DoS) has given particular importance to developing and disseminating gender statistics in order to comply with international standards, and to measure the size of the gaps that must be bridged to provide new statistics and data. As an expression of the response of DoS to the international commitments ratified by Jordan regarding the creation of a national mechanism that seeks to promote women's economic, social and political participation, and preserve their gains and defend their rights, in order to achieve a greater level of social justice and equality of opportunity, the Gender Statistics Division was established in 2005 within the Directorate of Population and Social Statistics, which is an important step in the development of such statistics in Jordan. Within the new organizational structure in 2018, the Gender Statistics Division became part of the Data Management Directorate. Obtaining gender-sensitive indicators requires the availability of gender-disaggregated data in all surveys and censuses, so that gender indicators can be calculated and that DoS would have the capacity to identify gender gaps, imbalances, deficiencies and gender inequities, and then develop appropriate evidence and gap indicators-based plans and policies, to ensure gender equity and equal opportunities.

The gender-disaggregated data of the Department of Statistics also serves national policies, programmes and agendas by linking gender justice policies with available indicators according to the following steps of the Gender Statistics Division: 1. Identify the different areas where gender inequalities/inequities are observed, prioritize them according to their degree of importance in those areas, and ensure that there are policies covering those priorities; 2. Ascertain the extent to which data are available to follow up on the status of women and men in those areas and assess what data are available, to improve definitions and related concepts and include them in manuals, guidelines and handbooks; 3. Assess the extent to which data are available to monitor the status of women and men, to measure the achievement of policies and to determine the quantitative and qualitative nature of required indicators; 4. Improve the presentation and dissemination of data for use in strategies and to evaluate the efficiency of policies.

In reference to the plans and actions undertaken by DoS to assess the SDG indicators, and in particular Goal 5 on Gender Equality, DoS has established a dedicated Sustainable Development Goals Unit and a special Sustainable Development Goals Task Force that is tasked with providing substantial support to the Unit. Responsibilities related to ensuring the quality of SDG indicators are also reflected in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, which also focuses on the importance of enhancing the quality of administrative records in covering important data gaps in the future. These efforts will provide numerical representation of the status of women and of gender gaps, while serving to monitor and report on the implementation of the SDGs, in order to prompt necessary action.

DoS is also working to institutionalize gender statistics internally, which involves networking with all Directorates in the Department to ensure the production of data for key sectors for which there are no reference data, relying on censuses and specialized surveys conducted by the Department. This process is a key step for improving gender statistics to meet the needs of policymakers, monitor the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and fill data gaps.

DoS figures and data are available to all data users, but as the aim of preparing gender statistics is to reach the largest number of users, raising awareness of the importance of such statistics is a fundamental objective of the statistical process and the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics. The dissemination of gender statistics is not easy; achieving it requires dedicated efforts and systematic and sustained action in order to enhance the capacity of data users to use gender statistics and access them through the Department's website. This step is important to meet a challenge in the process of publishing gender statistics, which is the lack of awareness among segments of society regarding how to use statistics, especially gender statistics, and also DoS' interaction with data users and raising their capabilities to enhance their access to and use of gender-disaggregated data. DoS works to disseminate data and indicators through two interactive sections of its website: the Jordanian Women's Statistics section and the Gender Indicators section. For the indicators compiled by DoS to be standardized and comprehensive of all the issues facing women and girls in Jordan, there must be cooperation and coordination with ministries, institutions, and other data producers for united efforts in the production of gender data. It is therefore necessary to talk about a national statistical system that ensures the uniformity of data collection among all State institutions.

### 13- Centre for Women's Studies at the University of Jordan

The Centre for Women's Studies raises awareness about women's issues without interference in its selected subjects of research. Its research has touched on all issues facing women in Jordan. One of the most important recommendations it has made on women's empowerment is that there should be real political will for change. According to the respondent *"as long as women's hands are restrained by traditional and archaic moulds, their situation will never change and all of the daunting challenges that they are facing will remain the same without any change"*; adding that *"the cultural patterns that have restrained women since 1500 A.D are still hard at work, producing and sustaining such visions and reintroducing masculinity and femininity according to set social terms and condition"*.

As for the impact of social and cultural patterns on policies and laws, the respondent indicated that decision-makers carry traditional ideas, which in turn influence the

direction of policies and decisions: *“A Minister tells you that [gender] is haram (taboo) and is an imported idea and that women should stay at home. How could such a way of thinking contribute to achieving any improvement?!”*. The respondent said the same is true for Members of Parliament, who legislate laws and agree to amend them, adding that this council is a product of this traditional culture, thus, it simply regurgitates it. It is necessary to work on changing cultural norms, as the social system sidelines women and burdens men with more than they could endure, because: *“[we] burden him with the liability of your sustenance, your protection, your honour, and he has an army of dependents in tow”* and *“when he decides to get married, the father of the bride-to-be will ask for a dowry and gold as if he is selling his daughter”*. Work must be done on equity and women’s liberation so that they can enjoy full citizenship.

Connected with unemployment and the labour market, the respondent said social and cultural dimensions plays the biggest of roles in shaping women’s personality and their ability to participate in the labour market: *“The biggest burden for families is getting their daughters married and all that they hope for is for their daughters to stay at home”*. There are social problems as a result of unemployment, poverty and the lack of job opportunities, but the biggest conundrum is that this constrains women, creating a mould of *“hareem women [that stay at home] but with an academic degree”*, which is something that has affected the ambitions of some educated women who prefer the closest and easiest job opportunity so as to be able to fulfil their role as caregivers. If there is any ambition among other women, they face opposition from their families or their husbands: *“women left their homes but are still prisoners of the private mould”*. Women have become reluctant to enter the labour market as a result of the burden they incur, both inside and outside the house, and because there has been no redistribution of roles or the division of labour. Another challenge facing women is husbands’ control over the salary of a working wife.

Regarding the most important challenges that exist in the Personal Status Law that hinder women’s empowerment and the full exercise of their human rights, the respondent stated that the Personal Status Law for Muslims and Christians is very problematic in a real way. Some of the provisions of this law are good and others are unjust and surrounded by sacrosanctity, untouchability and hegemony, such as the right to divorce that is awarded only to one party and not to the other, and also the mandated will, which affects inheritance. Islam has opened the door to *Ijtihad* (interpretive judgment) that can suit each time and place so there is a need to reread and rewrite legal texts.

#### 14- Human rights activist:

According to a leading Jordanian human rights activist, Jordan has ratified the main international human rights conventions and has only made reservations to two conventions, namely, CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (on the

granting of citizenship to the children of Jordanian women, and on equal legal capacity and marital life). There are also some national laws that are inherently discriminatory or that discriminate in some of the articles contained therein. Regarding laws that discriminate in their essence, one example in the Personal Status Law, since it does not give equal treatment to women and men in terms of marriage and childbirth jurisdiction or guardianship provisions. In addition, the Civil Pension and Social Security Act states that men have jurisdiction over women and therefore have a duty to spend and provide for their families, whereas women do not receive a family allowance equal to men.

Article 16 of the CEDAW Convention establishes equality in terms of the conditions and termination of marriage and “joint responsibility”, which is considered problematic, even by women, in the sense that that would mean women have the right and the duty to spend. At the same time, some women do want that right and many men refuse to let them have it. Pregnancy through incest is prohibited, as is abortion. Abortion is a crime under national legislation, unless it poses a threat to the health, life and safety of the mother, and is carried out before 120 days of gestation, according to the issued pertinent fatwa.

Regarding indecent acts or what is known as “harassment”, the respondent said there are problems with regard to definitions and the burden of proof as there are no set standards: *“some say that it is enough for the women to feel it for her to file a harassment complaint, but where is the component of proof?”*. According to the respondent, a complaint may simply be malicious.

With reference to the role of religion in the issue of equality, the activist opined that the Personal Status Law is derived mainly from Islamic Sharia Law and jurisprudence under which domestic violence against a wife, work and polygamy are all legitimized, with cultural and doctrinal support. Regarding gender-based discrimination in policies, laws and culture, the respondent stressed that as long as jurisdiction and spending are the exclusive domain of men, women will remain excluded from decision-making. There is acceptance from husbands and parents regarding the employment of women, *“because they bring money”*, but it is only within certain restrictions and conditions, because the working environment is not friendly to women. The biggest challenge for working women is the issue of childcare, not to mention that the cost of women’s work is untenable as a result of low salaries, which are stretched too thin given the costs of transportation, nurseries, clothing, etc.

Women face challenges in political participation in two dimensions, the first of which is a culture that sees men as the sole decision-makers and the second of which relates to the electoral law. The biggest empirical evidence of this is that in the elections

or the nineteenth Parliament no women won competitively, although there had been competitive representation of women in the previous council. According to the respondent, a woman's voice induces social movement, especially if a woman is from an independent background, which is something considered unacceptable by many. Also, there is discrimination against women within parties: *"some of the members of one party resigned their party membership when a woman became the secretary-general of the party"*.

Concerning national policies on the rights of marginalized or at-risk groups (refugee women, women with disabilities, elderly and young women), the respondent remarked that any female migrant worker who contravenes the Labour Law or who flees is likely to be deported or administratively detained for long periods of time, although it costs the State Treasury JOD 750 on average during the arrest time period. The respondent added that the idea of removal was not a solution because the violation had been committed by the employer and not the employee. There is also an inferior view of persons with disabilities, especially women, as they are looked at with pity. There is no facilitative environment in terms of infrastructure and employment, and the cost of their employment is high, according to employers. There is also the serious issue of hysterectomy for mentally disabled women for fear of rape and pregnancy, although there are no legal provisions allowing such a thing. It is also not based on her opinion before the courts if she is mentally or psychologically disabled. Sometimes people with disabilities are tied up or detained by their families as a result of a negative societal culture. As for the elderly, their societal value is high, with the law even imposing alimony for a mother and father to be provided by their offspring, and there is free health insurance for those over 60 years of age. As for young women, the main problem is child marriage as a result of non-compliance with the instructions on the exceptions established by the law, and cases are on the rise because of the jurisprudence and sexist views about the physical maturity of a girl as well as fears about girls falling into disrepute. The divorce rate is also high among young women.

Regarding the system of prevention and protection against violence against women, the respondent referred said protection measures ought to be more robust in favour of women; however, the opposite is true as women are administratively arrested under the pretext of protecting them. Based on the Law on the Prevention of Crimes, which has been greatly expanded in its application and in dealing with honour crimes, when it comes to the examination of virginity, the Fatwa Department has issued a fatwa that articulates that this act is contrary to Sharia Law. Religious and doctrinal texts also reject this.

On the matter of education, the respondent emphasized that curricula have changed somewhat, but most teachers are unqualified, the educational environment was

substandard, educational methods were stereotypical and non-participatory, and activities were in line with stereotypes about girls. There are stereotypes around industrial education in schools, and about vocational training, yet the outputs of education do not serve the labour market. According to the respondent, attention should be given to the role of businesses and human rights, focused on the roles and responsibilities of the private sector, as there should be human rights standards in private sector plans and policies that include both accountability for discrimination, and the application of international standards, both to improve productivity and respect for human rights. Additionally, the respondent recommended paying attention to the stereotyping of some professions.

#### **15- Women's Military Affairs Department:**

The Women's Military Affairs Department was established within the Jordanian Armed Forces in 1995 by Her Highness Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein to open new non-traditional work prospects for women, as there were jobs and tasks that Jordanian women had never worked in before. Indeed, the Department has achieved the goal for which it was established, and women are now working in various fields of professional and specialized military work, as air force pilots, in the Rapid Intervention Response Platoon and in intrusion operations. There is also a Gender Inclusion Unit operating under the umbrella of the Department, which includes a Gender First Lieutenant and a Gender Second Lieutenant working on increasing the percentage of women in the field, as well as on the development and implementation of strategies. To this end, the Gender Inclusion Strategy of the Jordanian Armed Forces 2021–2024 aims to provide a culture and environment that contributes to promoting equality between men and women, eliminating all manifestations of gender discrimination, including gender equality and gender-responsive strategies, as well as handling internal and external follow-up on gender inclusion (through an annual report on women's participation in all stages of their service, from recruitment to retirement), and the appointment of senior male and female leaders as gender advocates/ambassadors. The Unit also trains military women in various departments and holds workshops and awareness-raising lectures, in cooperation with the Directorate of Military Training. An Introduction to Gender Handbook has also been prepared in cooperation with UN Women and the JNCW.

According to the respondent, a number of factors have helped improve women's position and roles, ranging from the aspirations of the Hashemite leadership, and the recognition of the importance of Jordanian women in peace, security, armed conflicts and countering violent extremism. In line with regional and international developments, and to activate Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, women's role has been enhanced in new fields such as participation in peacekeeping forces. Military women have participated in peacekeeping missions in the Congo, Western Sahara and Central Africa, working as international observers and commanding forces. This has been

essential to increase the rate of women's participation and to highlight their important role in fighting violence, combating extremism and terrorism, and eliminating all forms of violence to reach stable and secure societies.

## **Conclusions and recommendations of Chapter 3: Gender equality from the perspective of opinions and social trends:**

- 1. Concepts related to the sexes and gender equality:** The concepts of “justice and equity” are preferred over the term “gender equality” from a religious and social standpoint, and the concept of gender is confusing and stereotyped with a lack of clarity about the term among boys and girls alike.

### **Recommendation:**

- Intensify work to clarify concepts through all relevant institutions and to emphasize that equal rights are the basis of justice.

- 2. Commitment of institutions to introduce strategies and action plans to promote gender equality:** The Government has adopted gender inclusion in national policies, while the IMC has played a key role in putting women's issues on top of the agenda and contributed to the adoption of the policy of gender inclusion within governmental institutions. The National Strategy for Women's Affairs 2020–2025 was aligned with national plans, international commitments and the SDGs, including Goal 5 on gender equality, and endorsed by the IMC. Gender statistics were institutionalized within the Department of Statistics to meet the needs of policymakers, monitor the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and fill data gaps. However, reports show that Jordan is one of the 10 lowest-ranked countries in the world on the subject of gender equality, and the implementation of its gender inclusion policy has not been reflected in the strategies and action plans of many institutions. The Government has committed to raising women's participation in the labour market to 25%, up from the current rate of around 14% .

### **Recommendations:**

- Involve the public sector and civil society organizations in the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Women 2020–2025, with technical and financial support.
- Promote the dissemination and awareness of international conventions ratified by Jordan on gender equality and non-discrimination.

- 3. Incorporation of a gender perspective:** Gender Units have been established with the support of the JNCW in many institutions in the public sector, and some of them have made strides in terms of preparing gender mainstreaming policies for

the institution, starting with a Strategic Plan, regulations, instructions, legislation and other policies. However, many of these ministries or departments have not committed to institutionalizing the work of these Gender Units and many have had no influence on decision-makers, either to introduce gender policies or achieve the tasks assigned to them.

**Recommendations:**

- Conduct a study on the role and reality of gender units.
- Link these units to the minister or secretary-general of the institution so that they can have a role in formulating the policies of these units and training staff for this task.

**4. Political participation:** Women face challenges in parliamentary participation, including financial independence, political financing, societal culture, the way votes are counted and all forms of political violence. The parties are also unattractive for a number of reasons: including the dominance of the secretary-general of the party, the interests of the party's members, their poor performance and influence on the democratic process, and a weak party culture. MoPPA has adopted the financial contribution system, under which the party will receive financial support only if it has representation of women nominated in local, municipal, decentralized or parliamentary elections. Young people are also apprehensive about joining parties in light of negative stereotypes.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish controls over the duration of a party's secretary-general's tenure, as well as controls to ensure that women have equal opportunities to run for office and technical and financial support.
- Raise the political representation of women to 30%, in line with Jordan's commitments to achieving gender equality.
- Introduce a mechanism to fight vote-buying.
- Raise awareness among young people about the importance of political participation.

**5. Economic participation:** Women's economic participation represents the greatest challenge to achieving equality. It is hampered by low wages, lack of transportation, private sector preference for hiring males over females, lack of commitment to flexible work, lack of commitment to providing nurseries, in addition to a societal culture that encourages women to work in the public sector and limits women's employment options and areas. Moreover, many small productive projects do not serve the labour market, focus on stereotypical roles and are monotonous, and women entrepreneurs face special skills and marketing challenges. In addition, lending institutions have contributed to the impoverishment of women because there was no oversight over them.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop instructions for flexible work arrangements and apply them to help women and men.
- Promote change and the redistribution of roles in family care, including through programmes for men.
- Create a permanent market for women's products and market them throughout the Kingdom with the support of municipalities.
- Standardize the rules and mechanisms for women's support funds to ensure qualifications and material and technical support.

**6. The cultural and religious system:** Cultural and societal beliefs play a major role in promoting the stereotypical image of women adopted by adults and youth, as well as influencing decision-makers, legislators and institutional culture. Local, religious, political, clan and family leaders also have a role to play in fighting discrimination by mainstreaming gender-sensitive attitudes and practices. The societal culture has contributed negatively to women's own views regarding their rights and life paths. In addition, religious institutions and traditional, male-dominated ideas justify violence, women's subordination and polygamy.

**Recommendations:**

- Work to change harmful cultural beliefs that run counter to gender equality and women's rights through awareness-raising programmes and have educational institutions emphasize the importance of gender equality and with all social groups and classes.
- Analyse and evaluate the institutional culture around gender equality and adopt policies to change negative culture practices and reduce their impact on performance, while enacting rules for behaviour that include ensuring non-discrimination between the sexes.
- Train local committees and associations to create a positive image of women's rights and to change the prevailing stereotype(s).

**7. The media:** Media are a source of information, culture formation, and they can serve to promote positive views about women's rights and gender equality. There is a lack of media programmes focused on rights and entitlements, the promotion of women's status and on changing gender stereotypes. Additionally, few programmes and articles highlight the real issues women face and areas of discrimination. The media also contribute to the physical exploitation and commodification of women in advertisements and commercial promotions.

**Recommendations:**

- Create special programmes highlighting female leadership models that buck stereotypes
- Work on gender-sensitivity training and the qualification of media professionals as well as citizen journalists, while emphasizing the importance of promoting gender equality and women's rights.
- Develop a programme to promote a culture of equality in media coverage.

**8. Violence against women:** There is an integrated structure in place to address domestic violence that includes a national framework that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of national institutions and the Domestic Violence Protection Law of 2017. There is also a system of services and internal procedures available in public institutions, civil society organizations and governmental entities, but there is a great challenge at the level of action on prevention, even though national policies stipulate that all sectors should work on prevention to avoid an increase in cases of violence. There is an urgent need for a system to track complaints, reports and cases. Domestic violence has also been found to be on the rise, in multiple forms, and submitting complaints to the Family Protection Department continues to be met with some restraint and is only done as a last resort. In addition, the application of the Prevention of Crimes Act has been greatly expanded, especially in dealing with cases of honour killings, with women administratively arrested for their “protection”. The Fatwa Department issued a fatwa to say that the examination of virginity is contrary to Sharia Law. The Government has not given priority to the appointment of specialists such as psychologists and social workers, despite the demand for these services.

**Recommendations:**

- Increase networking among institutions, especially civil society organizations and mechanisms that provide services through the uniform classification of situations of violence.
- Provide more protection, especially for women victims who are reluctant to report or to register a complaint against the person who abused them, by expanding protection measures and not confining them to a written pledge, and by securing more protection for witnesses and persons who report violence.
- Ensure the continuity and intensification of awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women through all institutional bodies.
- Build the capacity of civil society organizations to raise awareness to reduce violence against women.
- Standardize and disseminate knowledge on the issue of mandatory reporting for violence against girls under 18, between the Ministry of Health, the NCFA and the

FJPD, and emphasize the need to expand mandatory reporting to cover domestic violence against women over the age of 18.

- Expedite the issuance of witness protection instructions.
- Support the profession of social work, increase the number of social workers, build their capacities and qualifications, develop a merit system for social workers to become more specialized.
- Establish the Specialized Institute of Social Work for the accreditation of trained and qualified social workers by several accreditation entities.

**9. Child marriage:** A great deal of effort has been exerted to identify and reduce underage marriage. A national study was conducted and a national plan (for 2018–2022) was prepared to follow up on the recommendations of the study. A follow-up committee was formed, but these efforts have not had a significant impact on the reality yet, as there has been an increase in numbers. Child marriage deprives girls of their education and burdens them with early responsibility, which has an impact on their health. There is a challenge around child marriage as a result of non-compliance with the law’s instructions on exceptions. Societal culture, economic conditions and truancy also contribute to increasing the number of underaged marriages, which are most prevalent among Syrians.

**Recommendations:**

- Evaluate and review policies, plans and programmes while engaging more entities to reduce underage marriage.
- Study the extent of compliance with the instructions on exceptions for child marriage and the reasons for the rising numbers.
- Intensify campaigns to raise awareness and send continuous messages about the dangers of underage marriage.
- Follow up on female drop-outs and make education compulsory until the twelfth grade.

**10. Boys and girls:** Most concepts related to equality, gender, equity, justice and sustainable development were linked to societal customs and physical abilities. There are clear stereotypes about the roles of a boy and a girl when it comes to undertaking domestic chores, which are considered the sole tasks of the mother and the girls at home, which boys will only respond to a direct request to help the mother or do so to obtain benefits, but not as a duty. There is discrimination and differential treatment within the home, at work and in society. At the family level, boys have more freedom of mobility, and are allowed to work while girls/women’s employment is limited to specific areas. Reporting and protection mechanisms are known to young people,

however, priority is given to reporting violence or indecent acts to a mother, father or influential relative, and only in the event of a failure to respond is the Family and Juvenile Protection Department resorted to. In addition, there is a lack of awareness of the availability of health services (including sexual and reproductive health) for adolescents and young people, leading many to turn to a relative, friends and the Internet. Policies to provide youth-friendly reproductive health services were put in place in 2017, but they were not disseminated and some have not been implemented.

**Recommendations:**

- Align the Youth Strategy with the National Strategy for Women’s Empowerment and the National Strategy for Reproductive and Sexual Health; adopt policies to provide sexual health services; and open youth-friendly centres.
- Include human rights and gender equality issues within systematic and extracurricular (formal and informal) teaching materials that reject discrimination and promote justice and participation.

**11. Persons with disabilities:** Although there is a Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and great efforts have been made to facilitate the quality of life of persons with disabilities, it has been noted that their suffering is still significant, especially for girls, in terms of difficulty finding employment (caused by parents and employers) and difficulty in moving around out of fear of physical contact when other offer assistance. Hysterectomies have also been performed on women with intellectual disabilities, in secrecy with the cooperation and agreement of parents and doctors. Persons with disabilities also experience social stigma, high costs for home care, and potential home confinement.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide and facilitate academic and professional education for persons with disabilities in the public and private sector across the Kingdom.
- Provide enhanced services and tools to increase the accessibility and services available to persons with disabilities in all institutions, for example, including the use of sign language interpreters.
- Provide free home-care services as a priority for poor people with disabilities.
- Publicize care and home rehabilitation services carried out by associations while ensuring the availability of institutional rehabilitation.
- Intensify awareness-raising campaigns on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and publicize their rights and duties.
- Develop a mechanism to reduce the practice of hysterectomy for women with intellectual disabilities and enforce existing laws.

**12. The elderly:** Elderly people are highly respected, valued and cared for by family and society. However, due to difficult economic conditions, poverty and low salaries, some families are failing to meet their elderly members' health needs and to provide them with medical equipment. There are no residential care homes in the governmental sector, and there is a dearth of geriatric specialists, coupled with a high cost of home health-care in the private sector.

**Recommendation:**

- Intensify efforts and coordination among governmental institutions to ensure home health-care services for the elderly, especially for the poor.

**13. Education and training:** Although changes have been made to educational curricula, they have reinforced the stereotypical image of women. This has also been the result of education policies, masculine ideas and negative attitudes towards gender equality from some educators. There are challenges facing the education system that are reflected in the quality of education affecting future generations, including: the lack of knowledge and qualifications, and lack of awareness of the concept of modernity and human rights among some teachers. Stereotypical educational methods are based on the indoctrination of concepts, terms and information that will not serve students' analytical thinking. Traditional education activities reinforce stereotypes of girls. While there are initiatives to make vocational training less stereotypical, this has not been reflected in outputs, and many vocational training programmes do not serve the needs of the labour market, especially for women, focusing on stereotypical skills such as embroidery, hairdressing, sewing, soap-making and food preparation.

**Recommendations:**

- Strengthen the educational system through a critical thinking approach focused on modernization and renewal rather than indoctrination.
- Train teachers and increase their knowledge of human rights, gender, equality and social justice.
- Work to standardize the curricula of vocational education choices for males and females alike.

**14. Women, peace and security:** Much progress has been made in terms of gender mainstreaming in the police and armed forces, as a major accomplishment of the JONAP. At the same time, women's participation in peacekeeping missions can be increased, as well as their role in other areas of peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism. This requires constant attention to ensuring qualifications and an effective enabling environment. Women's civil society organizations and grass-roots leaders also continue to face funding and other challenges in their efforts to build, promote and negotiate peace, and require sustained support.

**Recommendations:**

- Increase women's participation in all areas of action to combat violence and promote peace in order to achieve stable and secure societies through formal institutional work, civil society organizations and community leaders.
- Provide support to local associations, building their capacity and empowering them with knowledge and skills to play a greater role in publicizing UN Security Council resolution 1325.
- Implement affiliate programmes and activities and contribute to creating a positive, supportive, protective and enabling environment for women and local communities.
- Intensify reform programmes for female and male youth leaders in local communities and involve them in practical programmes in cooperation with municipalities, parties and official bodies to ensure the promotion of female and male leadership.
- Expand the scope of capacity-building support in the security and military sector.

**15. Other marginalized groups:** In addition to people with disabilities and the elderly, many other groups are marginalized in Jordan, such as female prisoners, poor women who beg on the streets, and foreign migrant workers of any nationality. Despite the existence of support services for these groups, provided by the government and civil society organizations, these populations are not always aware of such services. The confluence of gender and other types of marginalization also magnify the challenges faced by females belonging to these groups. There are negative stereotypes of non-Jordanian migrant workers in general but these are worse for women, as they are linked to high crime rates, high prices and prostitution, and blamed for monopolizing work and services, shops and investments. If a non-Jordanian female migrant worker is found to be in violation of the Labour Law or if she escapes, she is deported or administratively detained.

**Recommendations:**

- Refer beggars to social support centres for rehabilitation.
- Follow up on families that employ their daughters to beg and support them financially and technically if necessary.
- Promote community integration, capacity-building and exchange of experiences among migrant and Jordanian women to create a culture and of protecting women's rights, and to disseminate positive messages about their potential.
- Organize joint programmes and projects among Jordanian women, as well as migrants and refugees, with the support of civil society organizations.
- Move away from the practice of deportation because it does not contribute to mitigating violations and violations may be by the employer themselves, replacing it with alternative penalties.

**16. Child labour:** Complaints of child labour are received through the Ministry of Labour and cases are referred to the Social Support Center. Anyone can report exploitation or any irregularities through the Ministry's Child Labour website for legal action. However, there are challenges in the process of reporting through the website, which relate to the lack of accurate information and can confuse the follow-up process by inspectors.

**Recommendation:**

- Undertake a national survey to find out the nature of the work of girls involved in child labour.
- Address challenges to the reporting of child labour cases through the website to ensure accuracy and establish clear follow-up procedures for inspectors.

**17. Responsibility of the private sector:** The role of partnership with the private sector at the level of social responsibility has been emphasized, but human rights standards must be integrated within the private sector's plans and policies, to include both accountability for discrimination, and promote the application of standards to improve productivity and respect for human rights.

**Recommendation:**

- Develop a Jordanian business and human rights plan for the private sector, in line with international principles, to ensure private sector responsibility in the fight against discrimination.

**18. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women:** COVID-19 has had a significant impact on all family members in all social, economic, psychological and cultural aspects, affecting the psyche of girls and mothers in particular, as they have had increased domestic workloads further due to teaching children, work inside and outside the home and online. Some mothers have been forced to leave work because of the closure of nurseries, and cases of domestic violence have increased, in addition to affecting the quality of education, as there has been a significant loss of knowledge, coupled with a loss of jobs and family income.

**Recommendations:**

- Disseminate the surveys, studies and response plans prepared by civil society organizations to various institutions and involve all in their implementation.
- Raise awareness of the value of unpaid care and domestic work and promote its more equal redistribution, to reduce the burden that now disproportionately falls on women and girls.

## Conclusion

Jordan's Gender Equality Profile JGEP provides valuable in-depth analysis of the different social and economic challenges faced by women and girls in Jordan. Chapter 1 highlights relevant national and international laws, policies and strategies in six key areas as well as relevant amendments and rearticulations over the years. It also notes articles that continue to discriminate against women and girls, including those from certain groups that face intersecting forms of discrimination, which Jordan must deal with as a priority in order to fulfil its commitments. This will require amending certain legislation, repealing others, and introducing new laws and policies (or enforcing existing ones) geared at protecting women and girls or promoting their greater empowerment.

Chapter 2 details the available gender data and statistics, particularly according to specific Sustainable Development Goal indicators, noting where there are gaps. Recommendations include the need to: develop the national statistical system, including through specialized training; provide comprehensive, periodic, high-quality and gender-sensitive indicators in different areas; invest in national surveys and studies and make them available to decision-makers; as well as to improve data-collection on gender-based violence.

Finally, Chapter 3 sheds light on prevailing social norms, perspectives and trends through a series of focus group discussions with institutional service-providers and with male and female youth. It equally reflects on the efforts and remaining challenges for addressing specific subject areas through 15 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, primarily from government. Recommendations include the need to: ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the policies of public sector institutions, with proper capacity-building and follow-up on their implementation; adapt educational curricula; amend labour, personal status, penal and electoral laws; improve reporting and increase awareness of protection and support services for vulnerable women and survivors of gender-based violence; and create special programmes to spur women's economic and political participation, as well as to promote the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

The development of Jordan's Gender Equality Profile JGEP is a means to an end, and not the end in itself. Jordan's Gender Equality Profiles aim to strengthen national capacities to monitor the implementation of its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. This compilation of data, legal information, social perspectives, analysis, and recommendations to address myriad gender-specific challenges seeks to inform and inspire evidence-driven advocacy to bring about change for women and girls. It is hoped that the analytical work included in the JGEP will also inform policymakers of the drivers and bottlenecks to sustainable development at the country level and contribute to the design of policies and interventions that can accelerate progress towards achieving national SDG targets by 2030.

Targeted group	Questions	Pillar
<p>Representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gender units in municipalities</li> <li>-The National Aid Fund</li> <li>-Media professionals</li> <li>-Local women's empowerment associations</li> <li>-Preachers</li> <li>-Trade unions</li> <li>-Study and research centres</li> <li>-Female productive entrepreneurs</li> <li>-Associations concerned with the implementation of resolution 1325</li> <li>-Vocational training centres</li> <li>-Women heads of household</li> </ul>	<p>Why do you think women's participation in decision-making positions is modest?</p> <p>Why did none of the 19 female candidates in Parliament win from outside the quota?</p> <p>What is the role of political parties in promoting women's participation in political life and how do we see such participation on the ground?</p> <p>How has decentralization contributed to promoting the role of women in public work?</p>	Political participation & decision-making positions
	<p>Why are women and girls at different stages of their lives exposed to violence within the family/society/work/public life?</p> <p>How can women be encouraged to report cases of violence against them?</p>	Violence against women
	<p>What do you think are the reasons for women's low participation in the labour market?</p> <p>How do you see the impact of productive projects run by women on improving their quality of life?</p> <p>How much do you think women benefit from financing and loan programmes?</p> <p>How do you think women who head families contribute to participation in the labour market?</p> <p>In your opinion, how does the amendment of the governing legislation reflect on the entry and continuation of women in the labour market?</p>	Economic participation
	<p>How do the media reflect the image of women?</p> <p>How can they contribute to promoting gender equality, combating violence against women and eliminating stereotypes?</p>	Media and women

## Annex 1: Focus groups discussion guide

Focus groups for two categories (institutional service-providers and youth) in the North, Central and South provinces were held, two per province, on the following dates and times:

Southern Province	Central Province	Northern Province
11 and 12 July 2021	Thursday 15 July 2021	Tuesday 27 July 2021
Venue: Aqaba/ Movenpick Hotel	Venue: Amman/Rotana Hotel	Venue: Irbid/Arabella Hotel

### First: Institutions

Targeted group	Questions	Pillar
<p>Representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gender units in municipalities</li> <li>-The National Aid Fund</li> <li>-Media professionals</li> </ul>	<p>What is your concept of gender equality?</p> <p>What does the concept of 'gender' mean to you?</p> <p>What do you think of fairness and equity?</p> <p>What is your concept of sustainable development and who is involved in achieving it?</p>	Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Local women's empowerment associations</li> <li>-Preachers</li> <li>-Trade unions</li> <li>-Study and research centres</li> <li>-Female productive entrepreneurs</li> <li>-Associations concerned with the implementation of resolution 1325</li> <li>-Vocational training centres</li> <li>-Women heads of household</li> </ul>	<p>In your opinion, do we have national legislation on gender equality and women's rights? Give examples...</p> <p>What about the Jordanian Constitution, the Personal Status Code, Domestic Violence Protection Act, Decentralization Law, Nationality Laws, etc.?</p> <p>Do you think there is any national legislation that discriminates between the two genders? Give examples.</p> <p>What do you think of Jordan's commitments to international conventions on gender equality and women's rights?</p> <p>Do you think we need a gender equality law? Why?</p>	Legislation & laws concerning gender equality

Targeted group	Questions	Pillar
Representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society organizations:	Is the education system geared towards gender equality? How does vocational training serve a woman's career path?	Education, training & empowerment
-Gender units in municipalities -The National Aid Fund -Media professionals -Local women's empowerment associations -Preachers -Trade unions	How can we build a societal culture that is supportive of gender equality at all levels? What is the role of religious institutions in reducing child marriage, polygamy and combating violence against women? What is the role of society and the family in promoting a culture of gender equality and in rejecting discrimination?	Cultural & religious system & prevailing social norms
-Study and research centres -Female productive entrepreneurs -Associations concerned with the implementation of resolution 1325 -Vocational training centres -Women heads of household	How do we see the role of women in peace and security, and countering violent extremism?	Peace & security, countering extremism

## Second: Youth (girls and boys)

Targeted groups	Questions	Pillar
Youth girls and boys by the following characteristics:  -School drop-outs -Poorer categories -Students -Persons with disabilities -Refugees -Gender activists -Trained youth committees -Child labourers	What does gender equality mean to you? And what does gender mean to you?	Concepts
	How does parental treatment differ between girls and boys? What are the differences?	Gender discrimination
	Do you think there is discrimination between males and females in the family/society/work/laws?	
	How do you see the health services available to you?	Knowledge of health services for girls & boys
	Are there services that meet the needs of adulthood?	
	What are the practices of violence against women and girls in your surroundings? Why do they occur?	Violence against women
	How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected family members, especially women and girls?	Impact of the pandemic on gender equality
	What do you think of the participation of males and females in household chores?	Stereotypes & role-sharing
	What do you do if you are subjected to violence, bullying, harassment on the street, inside the home, or threatened on social media?	Knowledge of reporting & protection mechanisms
	How about minors getting married? What are the reasons? Any proposed solutions?	Child marriage
How do you think curricula contribute to promoting gender equality?	Education & training	
How do vocational training programmes contribute to increasing female participation in the labour market?		

## Annex 2: In-depth interview discussion guide

### Common questions for all interviews

- How is your organization committed to implementing national strategies and mechanisms to promote gender equality and guarantee women's rights?
- Why is there a need to mainstream a gender perspective in institutional work in Jordan?

1-Targeted group		Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	In your opinion, how committed is Jordan to international and national conventions to promote equality and reduce gender gaps?	Governmental policies & plans to empower women & promote gender equality
2-	How compatible are national legislation and policies with SDG 5?	
3-	In your opinion, what are the reasons for the widening gender gap in Jordan?	
4-	How does the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women oversee and follow up on national strategies to ensure the inclusion of policies on gender equality and equity?	
5-	How has the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women contributed to prioritizing women's rights and issues within guiding plans to improve performance?	
6-	What are the desired results of the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women?	

2-Targeted group		Jordanian National Commission for Women
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	What is the role of the JNCW in promoting gender equality, following up on and guaranteeing women's rights?	Gender equality
2-	In your opinion, what violations against women reinforce gender discrimination in national legislation, laws and regulations?	Gender discrimination

2-Targeted group		Jordanian National Commission for Women
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
3-	How committed is Jordan to following up on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recommendations and on the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality?	Implementation of Beijing and SDG recommendations
4-	In your opinion, what are the reasons for the widening gender gap in Jordan?	Gender gap
5-	How does the JNCW work to build the capacity of civil society institutions with regard to women's rights and issues?	Capacity-building & training
6-	How will the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Women be implemented, and what are the expectations? Challenges, if any? And what are the recommendations on priorities for action to promote gender equality and women's rights?	Challenges & recommendations
7-	What is your assessment of Gender Units in ministries? How do they promote gender equality and women's rights?	Gender Units
8-	How can we build a societal culture supportive of gender equality by networking with civil society organizations?	Societal culture

3-Targeted group		National Council for Family Affairs
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	What policies and strategies has the Council drawn up to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality?	Policies
2-	What indicators have been identified by the Council associated with SDG 5 and what challenges are there to their implementation?	Gender equality indicators
3-	In your follow-up to the Strategy for the Elderly and considering the international slogan "The Journey to Age Equality", what are the features of equality and discrimination among the elderly in Jordan? How can we reduce discrimination, if there is any?	Discrimination against the elderly

3-Targeted group		National Council for Family Affairs
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
4-	With regard to the Standard National Action Procedures for the Prevention and Response to Situations of Violence in Jordan, what is your advice for dealing with the increase in domestic violence?	Violence against women
5-	How can we network among stakeholders to solve the problem of vagrant girls?	Vagrants

4- Targeted group		Family and Juvenile Protection Department
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How do the Family and Juvenile Protection Department's services take into account gender-specific needs?	Gender sensitivity
2-	What procedures and services are provided to victims of domestic violence (male and female) in different age groups?	Victims of domestic violence
3-	What is the role of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department in addressing domestic violence against women? Especially amid the pandemic, when rates of domestic violence increased to 33%?	Domestic violence & the pandemic
4-	What are the most important challenges faced by the Department in dealing with domestic violence, especially in relation to women and girls?	Challenges
5-	The Domestic Violence Protection Act requires the consent of the victim (if he/she is fully competent) to report any case of violence. What is your assessment of the reporting procedures for cases of domestic violence? And what is your role in encouraging women to report cases of violence they experience?	Reporting on cases of violence against women
6-	How well does the Department of Family and Juvenile Protection follow up on family issues within the electronic tracking system in the best interest of survivors of abuse?	Electronic tracking system
7-	What is the process for following-up on victims after a settlement is reached with the perpetrator of violence and victims return home?	Following-up with victims of domestic violence

5-Targeted group		Higher Population Council
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	What policies and strategies has the Council drawn up to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality?	Policies, achieving SDG 5
2-	What indicators have been identified by the Council relating to SDG 5? In your opinion, what are the challenges that may be faced in their implementation?	Gender equality indicators
3-	How well do you follow the recommendations of the HPC's study on early marriage, and how do you assess the current situation? How much cooperation is there between the Council and the Supreme Judges Department regarding child marriage?	Child marriage
4-	How can the demographic dividend be geared towards serving young women, as it is also for young men, and the elderly?	Youth & the elderly
5-	How committed are you to implementing the recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development on women's empowerment, reproductive and sexual health for young men and women?	Women & health
6-	What are your recommendations at the level of policies, laws and procedures to achieve gender equality?	Policies & laws

6-Targeted group		The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How is gender taken into consideration in the Council's policies?	Policies
2-	What types of discrimination do you monitor against persons with disabilities, especially women and girls?	Marginalization & social exclusion
3-	To what extent are the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities met in the services and programmes provided by all relevant ministries and services? How do they access these services?	Cross-sectoral networking

6-Targeted group		The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
4-	Girls and women with disabilities are more likely to be discriminated against, marginalized, repressed and confined to homes. What are the reasons behind this? And what actions are needed to reduce these practices?	Gender discrimination
5-	What is the role of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in garnering support to address the issue of hysterectomy for girls with intellectual disabilities?	Violence against women
6-	What is your role in influencing institutions to promote the participation of persons with disabilities, especially girls, in the labour market?	Economic participation

7-Targeted group		Ministry of Health
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How does the Ministry of Health consider gender in its policies, plans and programmes?	Gender-sensitive policies
2-	What services are provided to young men and women to ensure their reproductive and sexual health needs?	Reproductive and sexual health
3-	How do the Ministry's services take into account the health needs of the elderly according to gender?	The elderly
4-	How does the Ministry strengthen women's participation in directing policies and decision-making within the services provided?	Participation in health policies
5-	What are the programmes geared towards fighting violence against women (physical, sexual and psychological)?	Violence against women
6-	How do you assess the mental health services provided to abused women and girls in shelters, especially to victims of rape?	Victims of rape
7-	How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the health of women in Jordan?	The COVID-19 pandemic

8-Targeted group		Ministry of Social Development
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How does the Ministry of Social Development include gender in its programmes for poor families and in its efforts to combat poverty, especially among women?	Poverty
2--	Opportunity, dignity and empowerment are the pillars of the National Social Protection Strategy 2019–2025. What has been achieved and what social protection programmes have been allocated to women in all sectors?	Social protection
3-	How do you assess the services provided to victims of human trafficking and are they compatible with international treaties?	Victims of human trafficking
4-	Are the procedures for providing services to the families of prisoners gender-sensitive?	Marginalized groups (women prisoners)
5-	How do elderly care policies or programmes meet the needs of women in care homes and shelters?	Care for the elderly
6-	What are the specialized programmes for the rehabilitation of girls and boys involved in vagrancy?	Vagrancy
7-	How do the Ministry's procedures ensure a decent life for the loss of family bonds of boys and girls?	Loss of family bond
8-	What programmes target women and girls in local development centres? And what are the challenges and achievements?	Empowerment & training

9-Targeted group		The Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	What are the grounds for gender-responsive social policies that contribute to women's participation in political life?	Gender-responsive policies
2-	What are the Ministry's actions to enhance the role of women in political parties? And in decision-making positions?	Political parties & decision-making positions
3-	What are the main challenges and difficulties facing women in political participation?	Political participation

9-Targeted group		The Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
4-	How do you assess Jordan's experiment with the quota system and its impact on women's political participation?	Quota & political participation
5-	How does the Ministry view the results of the nineteenth Council elections, where no women won competitively? How can we achieve fair representation of women in the House of Representatives?	The representation of women in Parliament
6-	What do you think of women's experience in decentralization and local councils? And what are the most important achievements, challenges and recommendations for future amendments to the Decentralization Law?	Decentralization

10-Targeted group		Ministry of Labour
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	The percentage of unemployed women is the highest. What measures are being taken to reduce the unemployment rate among women? And what are the challenges?	Unemployment & programmes targeting women
2-	What are the most important practices that discriminate against women in the private and informal sector? And what are their monitoring mechanisms?	Discriminatory practices
3-	Has the appointment of a specialized female inspector in the Women's Labour Directorate to follow up on women's complaints actually encouraged women to file complaints? And what is the nature of these complaints and what are your actions in response?	Women's labour complaints
4-	The lack of participation and representation of women in trade unions is noticeable. In your opinion, what are the reasons for this? And the solutions?	Trade unions
5-	How does a flexible working system contribute to retaining women in the workforce and increasing women's economic participation? How applicable is it on the ground?	Flexible work
6-	What is the extent of commitment to activate Article 72 of the Labour Code, which requires an employer who employs 20 workers to establish a nursery for their children in order to provide a working women-friendly environment?	Decent work

10-Targeted group		Ministry of Labour
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
7-	The Labour Code prohibits child labour, but its numbers are increasing. What are the Ministry's actions on this issue? What is the percentage of girls in child labour? In which areas or occupations do they work?	Child labour
8-	What do you think of the contribution of refugee women to the Jordanian labour market? Is there a mechanism to receive their labour complaints? To what extent is there gender-sensitivity in the Jordan Response Plan to the Syrian Crisis?	Marginalized groups/refugee women

11-Targeted group		Social Security Corporation
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How committed are you to developing gender-sensitive indicators in investment policies, standards and procedures? How are they reflected in the annual reports of the Social Security Corporation? How compatible are they to Jordan's commitments to international treaties and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 5?	Gender indicators
2-	What are the plans and actions undertaken by the Social Security Corporation to reduce gender gaps and forms of gender discrimination? For example: the inability of unmarried young women or married women who die before their husband to pass on an inheritance.	Aspects of gender equality
3-	Has the appointment of a specialized female inspector in the Women's Labour Directorate to follow up on women's complaints actually encouraged women to file complaints? And what is the nature of these complaints and what are your actions in response?	Gaps & forms of discrimination
4-	In your opinion, how have the facilitations made by the Social Security Corporation contributed to covering women who are not employed? From what age can one subscribe to social security for this category?	Issues specific to women & girls
5-	In the informal sector, what is your role in following-up on getting female workers covered? For example, beauty salons, the agricultural sector, the secretaries of doctors and lawyers, etc.?	Informal labour sector

12-Targeted group		Department of Statistics
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How committed are you to developing gender-sensitive indicators in the department-issued reports? And how compatible are they with Jordan's commitments to international conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?	Gender-sensitive policies
2-	How does the gender-disaggregated data of the Department of Statistics serve national policies, programmes and agendas?	Aspects of gender equality
3-	What are the plans and actions undertaken by the Department of Statistics to monitor the SDG indicators, in particular Goal 5 on gender equality?	Sustainable Development Goals
4-	Are the Department of Statistics' data available to all? And how do you interact with data users to raise their capabilities to promote the access to, and use of, gender-disaggregated data?	Gender-disaggregated data usage
5-	In your opinion, do the indicators collected by the Department of Statistics cover all the issues and challenges facing women and girls in Jordan?	Indicators on women & girls

13-Targeted group		Centre for Women's Studies - University of Jordan
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	How does the Centre for Women's Studies work to guide research in line with SDG 5 on gender equality?	Promoting equality
2-	What are the most important recommendations of the targeted studies of the Center for Women's Studies on the empowerment of women in social, economic and political life?	Recommendations of studies
3-	In your opinion, how have social and cultural patterns influenced policies and laws, in terms of widening the gender gap and inculcating stereotypes in the minds of some people of the public?	Stereotypes

13-Targeted group		Centre for Women's Studies - University of Jordan
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
4-	Despite the high number of female university graduates, their rate of economic participation is still modest. What do you think are the most important recommendations for reducing unemployment rates among female graduates and enhancing their contribution to sustainable development and the labour market?	Labour market, unemployment and economic participation
5-	What are the major challenges in the Personal Status Code that impede women's empowerment and hinder the full exercise of their human rights?	Personal Status Law & women's empowerment
6-	In your opinion, what are the most important laws that discriminate against women and ought to be reconsidered?	Discrimination against women

14-Targeted group		Human rights activist
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	In your opinion, what is Jordan's commitment to achieving gender equality based on its commitment to the SDGs and its ratification of international conventions on ensuring women's rights and fighting discrimination?	Achieving SDG 5
2-	From your point of view, what issues are considered taboo or are prohibitions that violate the rights of women and girls?	Violence against women
3-	What types of gender-based discrimination are found in policies, laws, and societal culture?	Discrimination
4-	What are the reasons for women's poor political participation? What mechanisms are required for women to reach decision-making positions?	Political participation
5-	Women's low rate of economic participation is one of the biggest challenges. How can we mitigate against this challenge?	Economic empowerment
6-	How do the media reflect the image of women? How can they contribute to promoting gender equality, combating violence against women and eliminating stereotypes?	Media

14-Targeted group		Human rights activist
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
7-	In your opinion, how well do national policies take into consideration the rights of marginalized or at-risk groups (refugee women, women with disabilities, elderly and young women)?	Marginalization & social exclusion
8-	What do you think of the system for the prevention and protection of violence against women?	Prevention of violence against women
9-	How do you see the role of women in armed conflict, peace and security?	Women, peace & security
10-	Is the education system geared towards gender equality? How does vocational training serve a woman's career path?	Education & training

15-Targeted group		Department of Women's Military Affairs
	Questions	Pillar of discussion
1-	What policies and actions do you have in place to promote gender equality and the SDGs?	Gender-responsive policies
2-	What are the most significant challenges and difficulties faced by military women in reaching decision-making positions?	Decision-making positions
3-	What impact has Security Council resolution 1325 had on women's participation in peacekeeping forces and how has that resolution been reflected in equality and equal opportunities?	Resolution 1325, equality & equal opportunities
4-	How do you assess the experience of Jordanian women in peacekeeping forces?	Peacekeeping forces
5-	What tasks do women affiliated with peacekeeping forces perform in armed conflict?	Peacekeeping forces' duties
6-	What are the main challenges facing women in regions of conflict?	Challenges

### Annex 3: Participants of in-depth interviews

Participant	Name	Job title	Date of interview
Human Rights Activist	Riyad Yousef Alsubuh	Consultant	2/7/2021
Women's Studies Centre/ University of Jordan	Maysoon Wael AL Atoom	Director of the Centre	4/7/2021
Family and Juvenile Protection Department/ PSD	Feras Al-Rashid	Director of Department	2021/7/4
Jordanian National Commission for Women	Nuha Zaidah	Deputy Secretary-General	6/7/2021
Higher Population Council	Ghaleb Khalil al Azzeh	Technical Director/ Principal Researcher	7/7/2021
	Sawsan Elaiwi Aldaajah	Programme Manager	
National Council for Family Affairs	Mohammed Fakhri Mogdadi	The Secretary-General	18/7/2021
Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Muhannad Alazzeah	The Secretary-General	18/7/2021
Ministry of Social Development	Muna Saliem Alrfou	Head of Gender Department	26/7/2021
Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs	Jumman Aldahamesheh	Head of Women's Section	28/7/2021
	Nayfeh Yousef Al Lozy	Director of Civil Society Affairs	
	Abdulaziz Al-Zebin	Director of Party Affairs	

Participant	Name	Job title	Date of interview
Ministry of Labour	Eman Naser Okour	Director of the Women's Directorate	28/7/2021
	Haifa Ahmad Ali Darwish	Head of the Child Labour Unit	
	Hamdan Yacoub	Head of the Syrian Crisis Response Unit	
Department of Statistics	Amani Daoud Joudeh	Head of Gender Statistics Section	29/7/2021
Social Security Corporation	Janet Ghazi Mousa Al Tayeb	Director of Research and Studies Department	2/8/2021
Ministry of Health	Hanan Al-Najmey	Head of Women's Health Section	2/8/2021
	Hadeel N. Alsayeh	Director of Communicable Diseases Directorate / Via email	
Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women	Haya Nimer AlAlwaysheh	Rapporteur of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Empowerment of Women / Via email	5/8/2021
Women's Military Affairs Department/ Jordanian Armed Forces	Maha Falah Ibrahim Nasser	Director of Department	15/8/2021

## Annex 4: Names of preparers and participants in the study

Members of the advisory group formed to validate each chapter of the report (chaired by the Secretary-General of the Economic and Social Council)		
Sequence	Names with titles reserved	Institution
1-	Feras Al-Rashid	Family and Juvenile Protection Department
2-	Haya Ahmad Awad	Gender Office/Public Security Department
3-	Wojood Hussein Alsayaidh	Gender Consultant/Public Security Department
4-	Ali Mohammad Mahmoud Alshebly	Department of Statistics
5-	Nuha Zaidah	Jordanian National Commission for Women
6-	Majdi Fawzi Abu Sa'an	Ministry of Labour
7-	Janet Ghazi Mousa Al Tayeb	Social Security Corporation
8-	Enaam Ahsa	Sisterhood is Global Institute, Jordan (SIGI)
9-	Haifa Najjar	The Senate
10-	Naifeh Menwer Al-Zaben	The Jordanian Parliament
11-	Maysoon Wael Al Atoom	Centre for Women's Studies - University of Jordan
12-	Rania Alabbadi	Higher Population Council
13-	Reem Samir Albaghdad	Industrial Women's Business Council
14-	Jumman Aldahamesheh	Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs
15-	Muna Saliem Alrfou	Ministry of Social Development

Research Team		
Sequence	Names with titles reserved	Participant
1-	Munir Idaibes	Quantitative Research Team
2-	Kamal Sidqi Ahmad Saleh	Quantitative Research Team
3-	Nuha Muhreiz	Qualitative Research Team
4-	Khawla A.Hasan	Qualitative Research Team
5-	Wafa Banymostafa	Policy and Legislation Research Team
6-	Eva Abu Halaweh	Policy and Legislation Research Team

Supporting team		
Sequence	Names with titles reserved	Participant
1-	Metri Mdanat	Economic and Social Council/ Secretary General
2-	Bushra Shaher Yousef Abu Shahout	UN Women/Political Participation and Leadership Specialist
3-	Manal George Sweidan	UN Women/Programme Analyst
4-	Hisham Shatarat	Economic and Social Council/ Coordinator of the Work of the Council and Coordinator of the Work of the Quantitative Research Pillar Team
5-	Khulud Al Halahlah	Economic and Social Council/ Coordinator of the Work of the Qualitative Research Pillar Team
6-	Nabil Sulieman Abdullah Al Share'	Economic and Social Council/ Coordinator of the Work of the Policy and Legislation Research Pillar Team
7-	Huda Wa'el Amer	Proofreading (Arabic version)
8-	Jen Ross	Proofreading (English version)

## Endnotes

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