

## Facts Sheet

# **Women's Rights in Jordan: A Priority in the Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

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### **Findings:**

- Protection from gender-based violence is a top priority, the recommendations related to protection from exploitation, harassment, gender-based violence, and domestic violence constitute the majority of the recommendations accepted by Jordan concerning women's rights. This indicates that gender-based violence is considered one of the greatest challenges women face in Jordan. Strengthening the legal framework and enforcing laws rigorously to protect women from violence is essential for making real progress in this area.
- Urgent Need for Reform of Discriminatory Laws: There is an urgent need to reform discriminatory laws, including personal status laws, which still contain discriminatory provisions against women. Lack of progress in this area hinders the achievement of actual gender equality in Jordan.
- Economic and Political Empowerment of Women: Despite recognizing the importance of economic and political empowerment of women, their participation in the workforce and public life remains low. These gaps require sustainable policies and programs that enhance women's participation in the labor market and ensure their effective representation in decision-making positions.
- Resistance to Changing Nationality Transfer Policies: The resistance to changing policies related to the transfer of nationality, as evidenced by acknowledging recommendations concerning the nationality of children of Jordanian women, reflects significant resistance to altering current policies that deny Jordanian citizenship to the children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians. This requires the government to address this issue from a human rights perspective.

- **Need for Greater Attention and Radical Reforms:** Women's rights in Jordan need greater attention and radical reforms to ensure equality and social justice. Focusing on implementing recommendations related to protection from violence, gender equality, and improving economic and political participation of women is crucial for making real and sustainable progress. Cooperation between the government, international community, and civil society is key to achieving these goals and ensuring a better future for women in Jordan.

## **Background**

Women's rights are an integral part of human rights and are central to advancing equality, social justice, and sustainable development. In Jordan, despite progress in some areas, women continue to face significant challenges related to discrimination, gender-based violence, and restricted access to economic and political opportunities.

During the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of human rights, held on January 25, 2024, a significant number of recommendations concerning women's rights in Jordan were presented. These recommendations covered various aspects, including enhancing gender equality, combating violence against women and girls, improving access to work and providing a decent work environment, and ensuring effective political participation for women.

Jordan accepted approximately 12% of the recommendations related to women's rights from the fourth UPR. However, some Jordanian laws still contain discriminatory provisions against women, such as those related to personal status and nationality. Women and girls suffer from high levels of violence, including domestic violence.

Moreover, women face significant challenges in accessing economic opportunities. The female labor force participation rate is only 15.5%,<sup>1</sup> and there is a substantial gender pay gap, limiting women's ability to achieve economic empowerment. Although there has been an improvement in female representation in parliament and municipal councils, women's participation in political life remains limited, and their voices are often marginalized in decision-making processes.

## **Areas of Focus for Women's Rights Recommendations Accepted by Jordan**

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of women's rights recommendations accepted by Jordan during the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), categorized by focus areas. The largest share of these recommendations, 38%, pertains to protection from exploitation, harassment, gender-based violence, and domestic violence. This emphasis reflects serious

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Statistics, "Quarterly Report on Employment and Unemployment in the Kingdom for the First Quarter of 2024," 2024

concerns about the levels of violence, harassment, and exploitation faced by women in Jordan. This focus area includes recommendations for strengthening the legal and regulatory framework to protect women from violence, ensuring strict enforcement of laws, and providing support and services to survivors of violence. The substantial attention to this area indicates that gender-based violence is one of the most significant challenges facing women in Jordan.

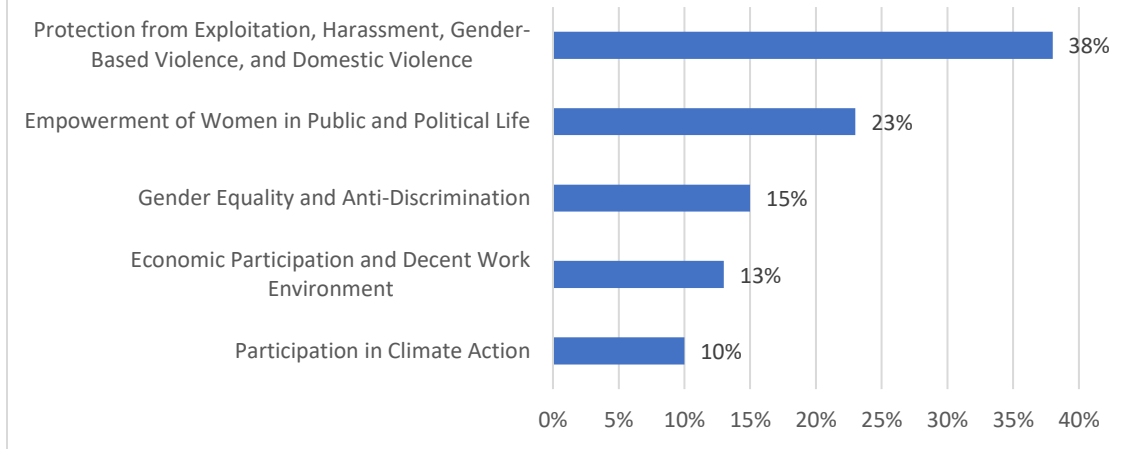
Recommendations related to empowering women in public and political life account for 23% of the total recommendations. This acknowledges the importance of increasing women's participation in decision-making positions and effective political involvement. It indicates an urgent need for policies and programs that support women's representation in government bodies and legislative councils, and encourage active participation in public life. Achieving gender balance in these areas is crucial to ensuring that women's voices are heard and influential in shaping public policies, especially as Jordan prepares for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Economic Participation and Decent Work account for 13% of the total women's rights recommendations accepted by Jordan, reflecting an acknowledgment of the importance of economically empowering women and ensuring they have access to decent and safe work opportunities. This includes issues such as wage equality, improving working conditions, and increasing women's participation in the workforce. This focus indicates ongoing challenges in Jordan's labor market, where women's participation remains low, with significant wage and opportunity gaps between genders.

15% of the recommendations pertain to gender equality and combating discrimination, highlighting the significant importance of enhancing gender equality and addressing discrimination against women. This includes calls for amending discriminatory laws and policies and ensuring their effective implementation. The focus on this area reflects the legal and social gaps that continue to permit discrimination against women in Jordan, emphasizing the urgent need for legal and social reforms to achieve genuine equality.

Lastly, 10% of the recommendations accepted by Jordan concern enhancing women's role in climate action. This signifies growing awareness of the need to involve women in designing and implementing environmental policies, especially in light of climate change impacts that often disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, including women. This focus underscores the importance of building women's capacities to participate in climate initiatives and ensuring that climate policies are inclusive and gender-sensitive.

Figure 1: Areas of Focus for Women's Rights Recommendations Accepted by Jordan in the Fourth Universal Periodic Review



### Areas of Focus for Women's Rights Recommendations Noted by Jordan

Despite Jordan's acceptance of a significant number of women's rights-related recommendations during the fourth cycle of the UPR, it took note of a considerable number as well (11%). The distribution of these recommendations is illustrated in Figure 2.

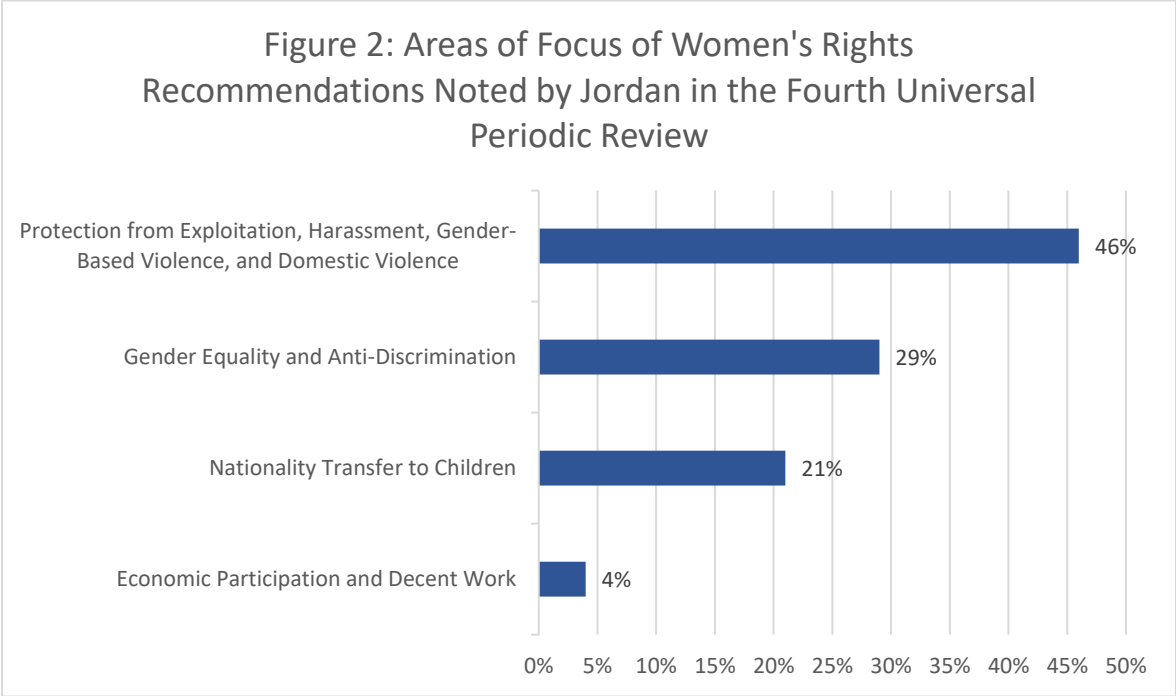
Recommendations related to protection from exploitation, harassment, gender-based violence, and domestic violence make up the largest portion (46%) of the recommendations noted by Jordan. A closer examination of these recommendations reveals specific calls to ratify relevant conventions on addressing violence and harassment, such as Convention No. 190, amend the Penal Code to combat gender-based violence, and provide a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women in the law.

This focus reflects increasing international concern regarding the levels of gender-based violence in Jordan, which is considered a significant issue requiring effective interventions. The decision not to accept these recommendations suggests potential challenges in amending existing policies or laws or improving implementation mechanisms to effectively protect women and girls from violence.

Recommendations related to gender equality and combating discrimination constitute 29%. This indicates that there are structural issues in Jordanian society and law regarding gender discrimination that have not been adequately addressed. Jordan's noting of these recommendations reflects hesitation in making fundamental legal or social changes to address these issues, which could hinder actual progress towards equality. For example, Jordan noted

recommendations related to withdrawing all reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, amending Article 6 of the Constitution to include a gender discrimination prohibition, enacting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, and repealing all discriminatory provisions in Jordanian legislation.

Recommendations concerning the transmission of nationality to children represent 21% of the recommendations noted by Jordan. Jordan noted all recommendations in this area, indicating significant resistance to changing current policies linked to national identity and sovereignty concepts. Children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians continue to be deprived of Jordanian citizenship.



## **Recommendations**

Women's rights in Jordan are essential to achieving equality and social justice. The efforts of the international community, civil society, and the government must come together to ensure the implementation of the recommendations on women's rights that were presented during the UPR. Committing to and effectively applying these recommendations can make a significant difference in the lives of women in Jordan and promote progress toward a more just and inclusive society.

### **Recommendations for the Jordanian Government:**

- Commit to reviewing and reforming discriminatory laws against women, such as personal status and nationality laws. These reforms should include amending Article 6 of the Constitution to add a prohibition against gender-based discrimination.
- Adopt and implement effective policies to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. This includes ratifying relevant international conventions, such as the International Labour Organization Convention No. 190, and amending the Penal Code to include a comprehensive definition of violence against women.
- Enhance women's representation in government bodies and legislative councils through policies and programs that support women's participation in decision-making. These policies should encourage women to participate in elections and actively engage in public life.
- Develop programs and policies to improve women's employment opportunities and ensure they have decent and safe working environments. These policies should include promoting equal pay and combating workplace discrimination.
- Review nationality policies concerning children to grant the children of Jordanian mothers married to non-Jordanians the right to obtain Jordanian citizenship. The government should reconsider these laws from a human rights perspective to ensure non-discrimination against women in this area.

### **Recommendations for the International Community:**

- Provide ongoing technical and financial support to Jordanian civil society organizations, particularly those working in the field of women's rights. This support can enhance their capacity to monitor the implementation of recommendations and advocate for legal and social reforms.
- Regularly monitor the implementation of recommendations that Jordan has accepted concerning women's rights, providing periodic reports on progress made and identifying

areas needing improvement. Such monitoring ensures that the Jordanian government adheres to its international commitments.

**Recommendations for Civil Society:**

- Organize awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal attitudes towards women's rights, with a focus on the importance of gender equality and protection from violence. These campaigns should target all segments of society, including decision-makers.
- Continue monitoring and documenting violations related to women's rights, such as cases of violence, harassment, and discrimination. Providing this information to international bodies can help apply pressure for change.

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