

Report:

**Priorities of the Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR): A Civil Society
Roadmap for Enhancing Human Rights in Jordan**

Phenix Center For Economic and Informatics Studies

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Introduction

An analysis of the recommendations accepted by Jordan in the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of human rights reveals that the five most concentrated areas of reform revolve around civil and political freedoms (12%), women's rights (12%), the right to life, liberty, personal security, and the right to be free from torture (11%), the establishment of justice and the rule of law (9%), and the rights of persons with disabilities (8%). However, Jordan's support for these recommendations was sometimes partial, as it agreed to a large portion of them but reserved judgment on others that required more radical changes, such as developing or amending laws and policies. This reflects a variation in its stance towards recommendations that carry the same essence.

Jordan is also cautious about approving a significant portion of recommendations related to international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms, despite their importance to the international community. Jordan accepted only 5.5% of these recommendations and took note of 22% of them, which may reflect concerns about the additional administrative, financial, and political commitments that implementing these recommendations might entail.

In a positive development, Jordan approved all recommendations related to the rights of persons with disabilities, development, and the environment. This reflects Jordan's commitment to enhancing these rights and aligning them with national policies and ongoing reforms.

It is worth noting that Jordan has shown flexibility in handling several recommendations it initially took note of but later accepted, particularly those related to removing restrictions on civil society activities, amending the associations law, and facilitating foreign funding. This shift indicates the government's willingness to adapt to both international and local expectations for enhancing civil society freedoms in Jordan.¹

However, the preliminary analysis of the recommendation areas reveals a lack of focus on the rights of the elderly, cultural rights, and the right to an adequate standard of living. This indicates a need for increased attention to these rights from both local and international communities. Jordan also reserved judgment on recommendations related to gender non-conforming individuals for social and religious reasons, as well as on all recommendations from the occupying state of Israel, based on its political stance supporting the Palestinian cause. Additionally, its reservation on all recommendations concerning stateless individuals reflects ongoing demographic and political concerns about granting citizenship to large groups of people.

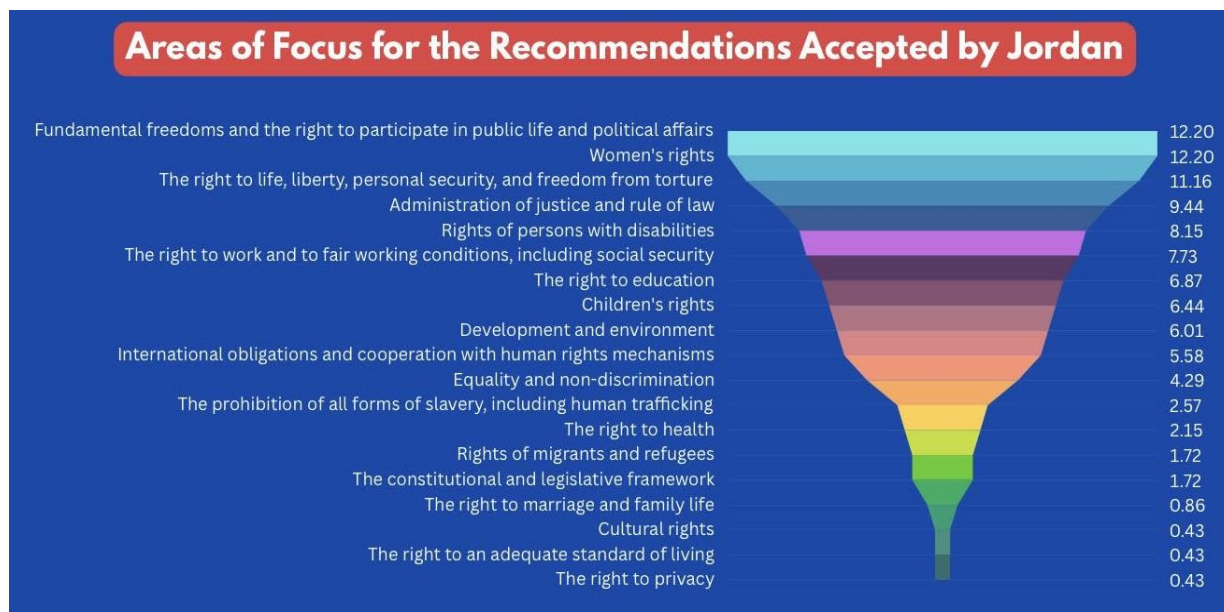
¹ Qudah, Hadeel, Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, Facts Sheet "Focus Areas of Recommendations presented to Jordan in the Universal Periodic Review (Fourth)," August 2024

In the context of the recommendations accepted by Jordan in the fourth UPR, civil society can pursue various pathways to achieve tangible progress in enhancing human rights. This roadmap includes key focus areas and proposed activities that support the efforts of civil society organizations in this regard.

Human Rights Priorities in the Fourth Universal Periodic Review

Jordan received 279 recommendations during the fourth Universal Periodic Review,² of which 204 were accepted and 75 were noted. The accepted recommendations were categorized according to different human rights areas, representing the priorities that need to be worked on intensively by both the government and civil society, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Areas of Recommendations Accepted by Jordan in the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights



Source: Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, August 2024

Enhancing Civil and Political Rights and Freedoms

When analyzing the recommendations accepted by Jordan and those noted in the context of civil and political freedoms, there is a clear indication of mixed government approaches. On one hand,

² **United Nations General Assembly**, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (Jordan)," June 2024

Jordan has accepted some recommendations that enhance civil and political freedoms and ensure legislative alignment with international standards, reflecting the government's intention to improve the human rights environment in the country. On the other hand, Jordan's noting of substantial recommendations without committing to their implementation reveals hesitation towards comprehensive reforms that might affect governmental control over the public space and civil society.

Jordan accepted approximately 12% of the recommendations focused on ensuring national legislation aligns with international standards, protecting journalists and media from restrictions, and enhancing citizen participation in political life, including improving the representation of women and youth in government institutions and parliament. Jordan accepted recommendations related to reviewing laws to ensure the protection of freedom of expression, including revising the Cybercrime Law to prevent its use as a tool to restrict freedom of expression. Although this indicates Jordan's willingness to improve the legal environment related to freedom of expression, there is a noticeable contradiction in accepting several recommendations related to reviewing and amending the law while simultaneously noting recommendations concerning specific amendments to the law that restrict freedom of opinion and expression online.

Table 1: Civil Society Pathways to Enhancing Civil and Political Rights and Freedoms in Jordan

No.	Main focus	Potential Activities
1.	Monitoring and Implementing Legislation Related to Freedom of Expression	Prepare Regular Reports Tracking the Implementation of Legal Amendments Accepted by Jordan, such as those related to the Cybercrime Law.
2.	Protecting Journalists and Human Rights Defenders	Establish Legal Support Units that provide immediate consultation and assistance to journalists and human rights defenders facing threats or harassment.
3.	Enhancing Citizens' Political Participation	Develop Empowerment Programs Targeting Youth and Women to enhance their participation in political life, including running for elections or participating in election campaigns.
4.	Advocating for Amendments to Laws that Restrict Freedom of Expression	Organize Advocacy Campaigns to Pressure the Government for amendments to laws restricting freedom of expression, such as the Cybercrime Law and the Penal Code. Civil society can leverage the formation of the new government in September 2024 to engage in dialogue with the parliament and

		government, emphasizing the importance of the required legal amendments and their role in improving the human rights environment in Jordan.
5.	Advocating for Amendments to Civil Society Laws	Organize Advocacy Campaigns to Accelerate Amendments to the Associations Law in line with accepted recommendations, as well as related laws and regulations, such as the Planning Ministry Law, the Public Meetings Law, and the Non-Profit Companies Regulation.

Women's Rights

In the fourth UPR of human rights, Jordan accepted a number of recommendations related to women's rights, approximately 12% of the recommendations, which were distributed across several key focus areas. The largest portion of these recommendations involved protection from exploitation, harassment, and gender-based and domestic violence. These recommendations included enhancing the legal and legislative framework to protect women from violence and ensuring strict enforcement of laws, as well as providing necessary support and services for survivors of violence. This focus underscores that gender-based violence is one of the biggest challenges facing women in Jordan.

The recommendations accepted by Jordan also emphasized enhancing women's participation in public and political life. This reflects recognition of the importance of increasing women's representation in decision-making positions and encouraging their active participation in public life. These recommendations highlight the urgent need for policies and programs that support women's representation in government bodies and legislative councils, especially at a time when Jordan is preparing for parliamentary elections.

Moreover, the accepted recommendations highlighted the importance of recognizing and empowering women economically and ensuring their access to decent and safe employment opportunities. They addressed issues such as wage equality, improving working conditions, and increasing women's participation in the labor market. There were also calls for amending discriminatory laws and policies and ensuring their effective implementation. This focus indicates an urgent need for legal and social reforms to achieve gender equality in Jordan. Notably, there were recommendations concerning women's role in climate action as well.

Despite accepting a significant number of recommendations related to women's rights, Jordan noted several recommendations without committing to their implementation. These recommendations primarily involved calls to amend the Penal Code to combat gender-based

violence, provide a comprehensive definition of violence against women, grant citizenship to children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians, and ratify related agreements such as Convention No. 190. The lack of acceptance of these recommendations reflects challenges in amending current policies or laws, indicating the need for effective interventions to protect women and girls from violence.

Table 2: Civil Society Pathways to Enhancing Women's Rights in Jordan

No.	Main Focus	Potential Activities
1.	Monitoring and Accountability	Provide regular reports on the implementation of laws and policies related to gender-based violence and ensure support for survivors.
2.	Advocacy for Policy and Legal Changes	Push for amendments to discriminatory laws and policies in the context of recommendations made to Jordan. These efforts may include advocating for dialogue with policymakers and organizing advocacy campaigns.
3.	Enhancing Political Participation	Organize election monitoring to ensure women have equal opportunities for candidacy and voting, and provide technical and advisory support to female candidates to help them build effective election campaigns.
4.	Economic Empowerment for Women	Support economic initiatives that enhance job opportunities for women by organizing workshops on professional skills and entrepreneurship, providing financial support for small and medium women's enterprises, with a focus on wage equality and improving working conditions.
5.	Support for Survivors of Violence	Establish legal support units to provide legal advice and assistance to survivors of violence, offer safe shelters, organize awareness campaigns about survivors' rights and available services, and provide psychological and social support through specialized programs.

The Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security, and the Right to Be Free from Torture

Jordan accepted a significant number of recommendations in the context of the right to life, liberty, personal security, and the right to be free from torture, approximately 11%. These recommendations included calls to strengthen laws and practices to ensure the protection of

individuals' rights to life, liberty, and personal security, and to prevent all forms of torture. Among these recommendations were aligning national laws with international standards, amending the Jordanian Penal Code to criminalize torture in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture, improving conditions within detention centers to comply with international human rights standards, with a focus on preventing torture and ill-treatment, and training security forces to respect human rights in their interactions with individuals, especially regarding the prevention of torture and ill-treatment during detention.

In contrast, Jordan noted many of these recommendations. Some of the noted recommendations included calls for abolishing the death penalty or imposing a temporary moratorium on its execution, and calls for improving transparency and accountability in cases related to arrests and torture.

Table 3: Civil Society Pathways to Enhancing the Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security, and the Right to Be Free from Torture in Jordan

No.	Main Focus	Potential Activities
1.	Advocacy for Amending National Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch advocacy campaigns targeting policymakers to push for amendments to the Penal Code to include a more precise and comprehensive definition of torture, in line with Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture. • Organize workshops with legal experts and parliament members to explain the need for these amendments and their positive implications for human rights protection in Jordan.
2.	Strengthening Legal Safeguards Against Arbitrary Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training programs for lawyers and judges on the rights of detainees and mechanisms to ensure their legal rights are upheld. • Establish legal support units to provide legal advice and assistance to detainees and their families. • Advocate for the immediate and strict implementation of legal safeguards related to detention, such as access to lawyers and notification of families upon detention.
3.	Improving Detention Conditions and Combatting Torture in Security Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize regular visits to detention centers by civil society organizations to assess conditions and document any violations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish regular reports on detention conditions to raise public awareness and pressure the government to make necessary improvements. • Collaborate with international bodies to develop training programs for detention center staff on international human rights standards.
4.	Community Awareness and Advocacy for the Abolition of the Death Penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize awareness campaigns on the impacts of the death penalty and its implications for human rights, based on international experiences. • Participate in seminars and dialogues with policymakers to promote discussion on the necessity of abolishing the death penalty or imposing a temporary moratorium on its execution.
5.	Building Security Forces' Capacity to Respect Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement regular training programs for security forces in collaboration with international human rights experts. • Encourage the government to integrate human rights principles into the official training curricula for security forces.

The Right to Access to Justice and the Rule of Law

Jordan accepted approximately 9% of the recommendations related to the right to access justice and the rule of law during the fourth UPR of human rights. The accepted recommendations focused on increasing training for judges in international agreements and developing their skills, as well as organizing specialized training for public prosecutors and law enforcement agencies on human rights protection. The accepted recommendations also included enhancing efforts to review the use of administrative detention and taking concrete measures to reduce reliance on this form of detention and its duration. Additionally, Jordan accepted recommendations to continue improving detention facilities in line with international standards and to enhance and expand the coverage of the free legal aid system beyond the criminal domain, including the expanded use of modern technologies in judicial procedures.

Jordan noted recommendations calling for the abolition of the Anti-Crime Law and administrative detention, banning administrative detention before trial, and ensuring that detention is only carried out under court orders. This indicates a discrepancy between Jordan’s willingness to enhance certain aspects of the judicial system and its reluctance to implement radical reforms related to administrative detention, reflecting challenges in applying the rule of law and protecting human rights.

Table 4: Civil Society Pathways to Enhancing the Right to Justice and the Rule of Law in Jordan

No.	Main Focus	Potential Activities
1.	Monitor the implementation of recommendations related to judicial training and skill development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and evaluate training programs provided to judges and public prosecutors to ensure they meet international standards and enhance their understanding of human rights. • Civil society can organize additional workshops targeting judges and prosecutors to deepen their knowledge of international agreements and human rights protection mechanisms.
2.	Advocate for a review of administrative detention and reduction in its use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch advocacy campaigns calling for a review of the use of administrative detention, with a focus on reducing its application and limiting its duration. • Establish monitoring units to document and track cases of administrative detention, with regular reports highlighting violations and challenges associated with this practice.
3.	Enhance access to free legal aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free legal support programs for vulnerable groups, especially detainees, to ensure they receive the necessary legal aid services. • Organize awareness campaigns aimed at educating citizens about their right to free legal aid and how to access it.
4.	Work on improving detention facilities in line with international standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular visits to detention centers by specialized civil society organizations to assess conditions and ensure compliance with international standards. • Publish periodic reports on detention conditions to raise public awareness and pressure the government to improve the situation.
5.	Call for comprehensive legal reforms in the area of administrative detention.	Organize advocacy campaigns urging the repeal or amendment of laws that allow detention without trial or for extended periods.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Jordan accepted all recommendations related to the rights of persons with disabilities. The recommendations focused on enhancing the rights of persons with disabilities by taking necessary measures to ensure their full inclusion in society and providing the necessary support to facilitate their integration. The importance of intensifying efforts to ensure that all public

buildings and educational institutions are accessible to persons with disabilities was also emphasized, in addition to improving their access to education and healthcare across the country.

Jordan also pledged to combat discrimination against people with disabilities and ensure their equal treatment in society. Recommendations calling for improved access to public facilities and transportation for persons with disabilities were accepted, along with increased efforts to provide appropriate support and strengthen the capacities of organizations working in this field. The Jordanian government also committed to taking further measures to increase the number of children with disabilities enrolled in regular schools, in line with the ten-year strategy for inclusive education, and to ensuring the provision of quality education for them.

Furthermore, a commitment was made to enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market and to provide housing and supportive services for them. The recommendations also stressed the need to develop policies to address stigma and prejudice against persons with disabilities and to ensure their active participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Finally, Jordan pledged to take necessary measures to support the rights of persons with mental disabilities and to further integrate them into society.

Table 5: Civil society's pathway toward enhancing the rights of persons with disabilities in Jordan

No.	Main Focus	Potential Activities
1.	Monitoring the implementation of recommendations and ensuring follow-up	Monitoring the progress made in implementing the recommendations accepted by Jordan, with periodic reports on the level of commitment to the recommendations related to the rights of persons with disabilities.
2.	Enhancing community awareness and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing awareness campaigns aimed at changing negative societal perceptions towards persons with disabilities and promoting their acceptance and inclusion in society. • Offering workshops and educational programs targeting various segments of society, including schools and public institutions, to raise awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and the importance of respecting them.
3.	Advocating for improved access to services and public facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with municipalities and local government bodies to ensure that public facilities and transportation are accessible to persons with disabilities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing advocacy campaigns aimed at strengthening government commitment to improving access to healthcare and educational services, ensuring that these services are inclusive and comprehensive.
4.	Empowering persons with disabilities and enhancing their participation in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing training and vocational programs aimed at empowering persons with disabilities to participate effectively in the labor market, and supporting initiatives that promote entrepreneurship among them. Supporting the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, including enhancing their representation in elected bodies and local councils.
5.	Providing legal support and representation	Establishing or supporting centers that provide legal support services for persons with disabilities, including assistance in filing complaints or appeals regarding discrimination or denial of their rights.

Other Priorities in Jordan's Universal Periodic Review (Fourth)

In the context of Jordan's fourth UPR, the recommendations addressed a wide range of priorities aimed at improving citizens' lives and enhancing their fundamental rights. These priorities included crucial issues such as the right to work and decent working conditions, with recommendations emphasizing the need to increase efforts to ensure equal job opportunities for all, focusing on prohibiting all forms of discrimination in the workplace, and improving labor regulations, including those affecting migrant workers.

The recommendations also highlighted the importance of children's rights, particularly ensuring quality and inclusive education for every child, with a focus on the most disadvantaged groups and taking measures to reduce school dropout rates. Additionally, there was a call to enhance educational infrastructure, continuing reforms to promote the integration of children with disabilities and ensuring schools are adequately equipped.

Regarding development and the environment, the recommendations focused on strengthening national capacities for environmental sustainability, emphasizing the importance of involving youth and women in climate action and decision-making processes related to climate change. These priorities reflect Jordan's commitment to achieving comprehensive and sustainable development, based on enhancing human rights and providing a safe and healthy environment for its citizens.

Table 6: Civil Society's Pathway to Enhancing the Right to Work, Children's Rights, the Right to Education, Development, and the Environment in Jordan

No.	Rights	Main Focus	Activities
1.	The Right to Work and Decent Working Conditions	Monitoring and overseeing working conditions	Organizing campaigns to monitor working conditions across various sectors, documenting violations related to discrimination or unsafe working environments, and utilizing the experience of Jordan Labor Watch in documenting labor violations and providing legal advice to workers.
		Advocating for legislative amendments	Proposing amendments to labor legislation to ensure the protection of workers' rights and improve their working conditions, and ensuring the effective enforcement of these laws.
2.	Children's Rights	Campaigns to reduce school dropout rates	Organizing awareness programs and community campaigns targeting parents and local communities to reduce school dropout rates, with a focus on supporting the most disadvantaged children.
3.	The Right to Education	Supporting inclusive education	Developing training programs for teachers and administrators to enhance their abilities to work with children with disabilities and integrate them into the educational environment.
4.		Monitoring educational policies	Monitoring the implementation of educational policies and ensuring the provision of necessary resources to achieve inclusive and quality education for every child.
5.	Development and the Environment	Overseeing environmental policies	Monitoring the implementation of environmental policies related to natural resource management and environmental sustainability, and issuing periodic reports on compliance with environmental recommendations.
6.		Encouraging participation in climate action	Organizing workshops and awareness programs targeting youth and women to enhance their participation in climate action and support local environmental initiatives.

Summary and Recommendations

To ensure the effectiveness of civil society pathways in enhancing human rights priorities within the framework of Jordan's fourth UPR, a comprehensive approach is required, involving close cooperation between the Jordanian government, civil society, and the international community. Each of these partners plays a crucial role in improving the human rights situation in the country and implementing recommendations in an effective and sustainable manner.

The Jordanian government bears the primary responsibility for leading reform efforts and implementing the accepted recommendations. By enhancing transparency and accountability and involving civil society in the decision-making process, the government can build trust among citizens in state institutions and create a strong foundation for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development.

The international community can provide technical and financial assistance to the government and civil society, helping to bridge gaps in national capacities. Additionally, the international community can play a key role in monitoring progress and offering ongoing advice to ensure adherence to and effective implementation of recommendations. Strengthening positive dialogue and exerting pressure on the government to meet its international commitments can significantly contribute to achieving shared goals.

Jordanian civil society is considered a key partner in promoting and protecting human rights in the country. By intensifying its activities in areas such as awareness, monitoring, and advocacy, civil society can play a significant role in ensuring the implementation of recommendations and amending legislation that hinders the advancement of human rights. However, to fulfill this role effectively, civil society needs a conducive environment that enables it to operate freely and efficiently.

This is where enhancing funding and removing restrictions on civil society activities come into play as crucial elements in empowering civil society to be a fully engaged and effective partner with the government and international community. The Jordanian government should work to remove restrictions on foreign funding for civil society organizations and streamline the procedures related to registering associations and obtaining licenses, as Jordan committed to in this review cycle. Additionally, dialogue with civil society organizations should be strengthened to ensure that policies and legislation supporting their work align with international standards.

By providing necessary funding, civil society will be able to expand its activities, whether in community awareness or in providing legal and social support to vulnerable groups. Removing restrictions will allow these organizations to operate with greater freedom, enhancing their ability to monitor human rights and contribute to reform efforts. Strengthening the partnership between the government, civil society, and the international community, based on robust financial support

and a favorable regulatory environment, will create a positive dynamic towards improving human rights in Jordan. This collaboration will ensure effective implementation of recommendations and support Jordan's efforts in building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

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