**Request for inputs: HRC res 44/2 on needs assessment for HR response to pandemic and other health emergencies**

Jordan

*Freedom of expression, association and assembly*

Ongoing concerns regarding the restriction of freedom of expression as well as of freedom of association and assembly, continued during the COVID-19 period. These issues include reports that journalists and other media workers have been arrested, detained and charged with serious offences for reporting which was critical of the government’s response.

On 9 April 2020, the general manager and the news director for the news organization Roya News were both arrested by the Public Prosecutor of the State Security Court. The men were arrested due to an item Roya News aired concerning the difficulties daily wage earners and other lower-income Jordanians were facing due to the lockdown and their inability to earn an income. The two men were released on bail on 12 April 2020.

On 24 December 2020, the Jordanian Press Association was notified by the State Security Court prosecutor that Jordanian publisher Jamal Haddad had been summoned and detained pending investigation under the country’s anti-terrorism law. This followed an editorial of 22 December 2020 on news website Alwakaai, where Haddad had raised questions about government officials receiving the COVID-19 vaccine when it was not yet available to the general public. It was being reported in Jordanian media that Haddad was accused by the authorities of “endangering the security of the country and causing sedition and disturbing public order”. He was reportedly released on bail on 29 December 2020.

On 25 July 2020, the country's Attorney General ordered the closure of the Jordan Teachers’ Syndicate and arrested its board members, despite not having the power to do so under Jordanian law. On 26 July, the Attorney General also issued an order banning all news stories, posts or comments about the Syndicate's closure and the arrest of its board members in all media and social media platforms, apart from official authorised outlets. This was followed on 9 August 2020 with Amman’s Magistrates Court also ordering a gag order on the court proceedings concerning the Syndicate. The tensions between the Syndicate and the Government reignited in April 2020 after the Government froze all public sector pay rises until the end of the year citing the COVID-19 pandemic as a justification, thereby reneging on a previous agreement made with the Syndicate after a contentious strike in September 2019.

*Violence against women*

Reports from national and international civil society organizations, as well as government surveys, indicate that gender-based violence (GBV) has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reasons highlighted for this trend include unemployment, economic stress and poor mental health. In an UNFPA report conducted with Plan International and the Institute of Family Health (April/May 2020), 69 per cent of respondents said they had witnessed an increase in GBV violence since the start of the pandemic. Local groups also raised concerns over rising levels of GBV, but also that COVID-19 restrictions were impeding their ability to intervene in such cases to protect women. The Family Protection Department dealt with 1,685 domestic violence cases from March to May 2020. The Solidarity is Global Institute also announced that they had received more than 800 cases within those three months, which is near the same amount for the whole of 2019.

*Child labour*

UNICEF Jordan and local organization the Jordanian Labour Watch have reported that they believe the number of children forced into work as a consequence of the pandemic has risen, and that it will likely rise further. In June 2020, Jordan Labour Watch indicated they believed there were 70,000 child labourers in Jordan. The causes in the rise in child labour have been put down to the closure of schools as part of COVID-19 restriction measures as well as the parents of economically disadvantaged children not finding work and needing their children to gain an income to cover expenses.

*Best practices*

Jordan began the roll-out of its COVID-19 vaccination programme on 13 January 2021. The Government decided to allow all individuals in Jordan to have access to the vaccination programme, including asylum seekers and refugees. On 14 January 2021, UNHCR reported that Jordan had become one of the first countries in the world to open access to a COVID-19 vaccination programme to refugees, with the first refugee vaccinated on that day. Out of the 350,000 persons registered on the Government vaccination platform, 7% are non-Jordanians from more than 100 nationalities. While it appears Jordan’s programme is genuinely inclusive, more data needs to be gathered to ensure that asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers, and other non-Jordanians in vulnerable situations are receiving proper access to the programme.