



Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Summary record of the 2152nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 7 November 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Heller

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention *(continued)*

Fourth periodic report of Jordan (continued) (CAT/C/JOR/4; CAT/C/JOR/QPR/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Jordan joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Jordan** said that the Office for Transparency and Human Rights had been set up as part of the Public Security Directorate. Staffed by experienced judges and prosecutors, the Office had 48 subsections in security directorates across the country. It conducted impartial and independent investigations into all allegations of torture. The Office had its own email address for receiving complaints and was linked to the “Bikhidmatikum” (At Your Service) platform. It also received complaints referred by the National Centre for Human Rights. Both the Office and the National Centre undertook regular and unannounced visits to detention facilities, and prosecutors were ready to launch immediate investigations into any allegations that might emerge. In addition, the Office conducted training for security officials regarding torture complaints mechanisms.
3. Responsibility for investigating offences, including torture, committed by members of the security services lay with a special prosecutor envisaged under the Public Security Act. That, however, did not entail a departure from general legal rules, as investigations and prosecutions followed the same procedures as in the ordinary courts. The Public Security Act had been amended to create the Public Security Judiciary Directorate and the Public Security Court of Appeal. The presence of military judges in no way influenced the rulings handed down by the Public Security Court in cases involving the Public Security Directorate. In any case, one member of the bench had to be a judge from the regular courts, appointed by the Judicial Council. Law enforcement officials were subject to ordinary law, including the Criminal Code, as well as to military law. They enjoyed no immunity from prosecution or punishment for any crimes they might commit, including torture or ill-treatment, and they could not avoid responsibility by claiming to have followed orders from a superior. In fact, their obligation to follow orders applied only if the order was legal, and torture and ill-treatment were unequivocally criminalized under the law. Law enforcement officials who refused to obey an illegal order could not be held criminally liable.
4. Fundamental legal safeguards were in place to protect persons deprived of their liberty. For example, law enforcement personnel were required to draft an official record of arrests, including the time and date and the name of the person being detained, as well as the names of the officials involved and of the authority that issued the warrant. Once detained, suspects had the right to contact a person of their choice, they underwent an independent medical examination and they were brought before prosecutors within 24 hours. Detained persons could not be coerced into making a statement, and nothing in the law prevented them from employing the services of a lawyer from the moment of their arrest. Body searches were conducted in line with international standards and in such a way as to safeguard the dignity of the persons concerned. An operational guide regulating arrest and detention procedures had been distributed to security directorates across the country.
5. In cooperation with the National Centre for Human Rights and other local and international organizations, the Public Security Directorate ran human rights training programmes for law enforcement officials. The training focused on a number of specific areas including the Convention, preventive security, prevention of drug abuse and the administration of places of detention. Training courses were also organized by the Family Protection Department. A total of 215 courses had been conducted in 2020, 309 in 2021, 352 in 2022, 425 in 2023 and 241 in the first half of 2024, and evaluations had shown that the training courses had led to a reduction in reported allegations of torture.
6. Sameer Nemrawi had been convicted of assaulting law enforcement officials. Ahmad Hassan Zu’bi had also broken the law and had been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 1 year. He was in good health, had not suffered any physical assault and was being held in a facility near his relatives. The detention conditions of both men were consistent with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

7. **A representative of Jordan** said that efforts on the part of the State to combat torture focused chiefly on prevention. In that connection, legislators had assigned a fundamental role to the Office of the Public Prosecution, which inspected places of deprivation of liberty and reported regularly on detention conditions. If any instance or suspected instance of torture was discovered, or if a person in detention made an allegation to that effect, prosecutors acted immediately to gather evidence, take witness testimony, inspect the site of the alleged incident and order a forensic medical examination of the victim. If the allegations were verified, the case was referred to the competent court.

8. It was important to note that all confessions had to be supported by evidence and that, in no circumstances, was a confession alone sufficient to secure a conviction. In accordance with established principles laid down in the Constitution and the law, no weight was given to any statement shown to have been made under duress, and even a minimal degree of coercion was sufficient for a confession to be set aside and disregarded. There had been several instances where courts had ruled to acquit defendants after finding that confessions made before law enforcement officials had not been freely given.

9. Jordan had adopted a strategy for the promotion of justice, covering the period 2023–2026, which focused, *inter alia*, on fair trial guarantees in criminal proceedings. The strategy also took account of recommendations made by the Royal Committee for Developing the Judiciary and Enhancing the Rule of Law, notably with regard to legal aid and access to a lawyer. The provisions of article 63 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure whereby accused persons could, in certain circumstances, be questioned without a lawyer being present were only ever applied in highly specific cases; for example, when the lawyer was physically unable to attend or when haste was required for fear that evidence would be lost or that the offence would be perpetuated. Prosecutors were required to inform lawyers of any procedures conducted in their absence. In no circumstances could prosecutors, if a lawyer was available, decide to question an accused person in the lawyer's absence.

10. The Government approached the problem of prison overcrowding from a rights-based perspective. A system of non-custodial penalties, first introduced in 2017, had been expanded following recent legislative amendments and, for certain categories of less serious offence, judges now had discretion to hand down non-custodial sentences. Moreover, persons previously sentenced to penalties of deprivation of liberty could apply to have their sentences converted. The applications were reviewed taking account of the nature of the offence and the character of the offender, as well as considerations of public safety. A total of 4,723 applications had been received in 2023, of which 2,404 had been accepted. Non-custodial penalties took various forms such as electronic tagging, rehabilitation programmes or community service. The use of imprisonment for debt had been curtailed while, from 2025, cheque fraud would be considered a civil rather than a criminal offence and would no longer attract a term of imprisonment.

11. The Judicial Council – an 11-member independent body – was the sole institution vested with authority to appoint judges, who were chosen from among the graduates of the Judicial Institute or from among practising lawyers. Initial training for aspiring judges included a specific module on human rights. Sitting judges also received continuous training and could choose from various areas of specialization. In 2023, some 825 judges had participated in over 200 training programmes, covering subjects such as fair trial guarantees, alternative sentences and juvenile justice, as well as human trafficking and torture. The training manual for prosecutors on the investigation and prosecution crimes of torture was currently being reviewed.

12. The Code of Criminal Procedure, the Juvenile Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Human Trafficking Act all contained provisions authorizing the use of modern technology in judicial proceedings to allow witnesses and victims to give their testimony remotely, thus minimizing the negative impact of court proceedings on them. Remote interviewing was mandatory in cases involving sexual assault and child victims.

13. The Domestic Violence Act provided for the comprehensive protection of victims. The Family Protection Department was the authority competent to handle domestic violence cases. When a case was reported to the Department, it immediately assessed the situation to identify the victim's needs and provide support as appropriate, including medical and

psychiatric care and shelter. Judges could issue protection orders for victims. In addition to criminal prosecution, a settlement procedure was available for cases of domestic violence; its use depended on the severity of the crime, the impact on the victim and the danger posed by the perpetrator.

14. When it came to juvenile justice, Jordan abided by international standards and attached particular importance to the principle of the best interests of the child, as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Specialized juvenile courts, judges, prosecutors and criminal investigation officers were available to handle cases involving minors. The question of deprivation of liberty of minors, which was considered a measure of last resort, was covered in all training for relevant professionals. Under the Juvenile Act, minors convicted of a misdemeanour could not be incarcerated. In cases involving more serious offences, it was for the prosecutor's office to decide whether or not to seek a custodial sentence or an alternative to detention, such as judicial supervision or community service. In 2023, alternatives to deprivation of liberty had accounted for 40 per cent of all sentences handed down by the juvenile courts. In the event that a minor received a custodial sentence, the sentence enforcement judge was required to visit the juvenile detention centre every three months and to submit a report on each visit to the head of the Judicial Council, with a copy to the Minister for Social Development, flagging any issues in relation to the individual's conditions of detention that required follow-up. Minors were provided with legal assistance in all criminal cases. If the child's family could not hire a lawyer for financial or any other reasons, he or she would be provided with a court-appointed lawyer, at the State's expense, for the duration of the investigation and court proceedings. Children were never interviewed without a lawyer being present, and any proceedings conducted in the absence of a lawyer would be considered null and void. Terrorist cases involving children were heard by the juvenile courts.

15. **A representative of Jordan** said that, despite the legal framework that had been put in place to protect expatriate workers and ensure equality between them and Jordanian workers, certain unacceptable labour practices persisted. In response to international recommendations and feedback from civil society organizations, the Government had conducted a review of existing laws and regulations in order to identify and remedy any shortcomings. As a result, in September 2024 the Ministry of Labour had published a guide on the issuance of work permits for non-Jordanian workers under the *kafalah* sponsorship system, which stipulated that such workers were exempt from the obligation to obtain a release form from their employer once 90 days had passed following the expiration of their work permit. The Labour Code had also been amended to allow foreign workers to leave their positions without notifying their employer, provided that they notified the Ministry of Labour within two weeks of leaving, and to retain their rights in the event that they were harassed or assaulted by their employer.

16. Under the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centres Act, officials from the Ministry of Justice were authorized to conduct both unannounced and scheduled inspection visits to all correctional and rehabilitation centres to assess the legality of the inmates' detention and their conditions of detention. The Ministry of Justice had conducted 47 unannounced visits in 2021, 59 visits in 2022 and 67 visits in 2023.

17. As noted in her country's report (CAT/C/JOR/4), the death penalty was imposed only for the most serious crimes and after a fair trial conducted in accordance with safeguards that were consistent with international human rights standards. The public prosecutor, the prison doctor, the prison director and a member of the same religion as the condemned person must be present when the death sentence was carried out. If the condemned person had no family, the prison administration undertook to bury the body. The death penalty had not been carried out since 2017.

18. In addition to the recent adoption of constitutional amendments, many legislative, administrative and institutional measures had been taken to protect women against domestic and gender-based violence. Among the most important organizations in that area were the National Commission for Women and the Working Group on Protection from Domestic Violence. Relevant documents included the plan for implementation of the Matrix of National Priorities for Strengthening the System for Protection against Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence. Shelters for women at risk had been established in 2018

throughout the country and provided a range of services, including psychosocial support and vocational training. Court personnel throughout the country received training on issues related to violence against women. Projects were also being implemented to protect women from violence in the context of the Syrian crisis.

19. **A representative of Jordan** said that, as described in paragraphs 29–34 of his country's report, while it respected the independence of the National Centre for Human Rights in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), the Government provided the Centre with steady financial support and had increased funding from 750,000 dinars in 2017 to 950,000 dinars in 2024. The National Centre complied with the Paris Principles and the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Under Act No. 51 of 2006, the National Centre had the competence to monitor, protect and verify respect for human rights in the Kingdom and to address any abuses or violations, including through referral to the competent executive, legislative or judicial authority. The Centre's mandate had been expanded, pursuant to legislative amendments adopted in 2017, in response to the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation. The amendments had also given the Centre's Commissioner General immunity when it came to the performance of intellectual and humanitarian activities, empowered the Centre to pursue compensation for individuals affected by human rights violations and specified the circumstances in which the terms of office of members of the Centre's board of trustees expired. Members of the board were appointed on the basis of their service to society and their knowledge of the principles of human rights as enshrined in the Constitution and international treaties. The board's composition took into account the guarantees of independence and pluralism contained in the Paris Principles; accordingly, it comprised 16 members from various backgrounds, including academics, trade unionists, representatives of human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and persons with disabilities. In line with the Subcommittee's recommendation, the board no longer included parliamentarians.

20. The Government was keen to promote freedom of expression and protect journalists through its policies and practices. The number of attacks on journalists had fallen as a result of the regular issuance of instructions that they must not be harmed. The authorities were prohibited from hindering the work of journalists, who were afforded all relevant guarantees in the context of demonstrations and strikes. Journalists were never detained in the absence of an arrest warrant. Several NGOs were engaged in monitoring and reporting on any violations that occurred.

21. Law enforcement officials continued to receive training on the exercise of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. Amendments had been made in 2024 to the legislation governing the right of access to information, which was the cornerstone of media and journalism. Between 2023 and 2024, Jordan had risen 14 places in the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

22. **A representative of Jordan** said that arrests under the Anti-Terrorism Act were made in accordance with the law. The Supreme Court had repealed a number of provisions of the Act that were not in line with international standards. The competent authorities ensured that lawyers were made available to arrested persons whenever required. No arrest warrants had been issued under the Act in respect of minors.

23. Between 2019 and 2024, the detention facilities operated by the General Intelligence Directorate had received 199 inspection visits, 49 visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross and 6 visits from the National Centre for Human Rights. Under the Anti-Terrorism Act, suspects could be subjected to restrictions on their movement, house arrest or searches of their homes or workplaces.

24. Article 26 of the Anti-Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Act set out the parameters for identifying the source and destination of funds intended to be used for terrorism and for confiscating such funds if it was proved that they had been laundered.

25. **The Chair** (Country Rapporteur) said that he encouraged the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to consider designating the National Centre for Human Rights as its national preventive mechanism.

26. It would be very useful to receive details of the number of complaints of torture that had been submitted and to learn how many had resulted in prosecutions and how many had led to convictions or acquittals.

27. While the Committee welcomed the publication of a juvenile justice strategy for the period 2024–2028, it remained concerned that the use of corporal punishment against minors continued to be permitted under article 62 of the Criminal Code. It would be helpful to receive statistical data on the number of juveniles in detention, the types of offence of which they had been convicted, the reoffending rate and the imposition of non-custodial measures on children in conflict with the law, as well as more general information on the treatment of such children in the judicial and penitentiary systems. The State party might consider introducing restorative justice mechanisms for juveniles, alongside the formal court system, and creating an independent monitoring mechanism to ensure that correctional and rehabilitation centres accommodating juveniles adhered to national and international standards. He would be grateful for the delegation's comments on conditions of detention for girls in conflict with the law and on the treatment of detained juveniles with mental health issues or intellectual impairments, as well as on how the authorities ensured that police officers, judges, social workers and other relevant professionals were properly trained to deal with children in conflict with the law.

28. He would appreciate an answer to the question he had put at the previous meeting concerning the application of the Cybercrime Act. In particular, he wished to hear more about the treatment of journalists detained under the Act, some of whom had reportedly been subjected to abuse.

29. **Mr. Iscan** said that it remained unclear whether perpetrators of torture could escape punishment through the payment of so-called blood money to the victim or his or her family members. Money could not replace full redress, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition, as set out in the Committee's general comment No. 3 (2012) on the implementation of article 14 of the Convention by States parties. He would welcome concrete examples of cases in which, following the payment of blood money, perpetrators had been prosecuted and punished and victims had received redress.

30. He would be grateful if the delegation would clarify the State party's position on the minimum age of criminal responsibility and its plans, if any, to raise the age to 14 years, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations on the State party's sixth periodic report ([CRC/C/JOR/CO/6](#)). He wished to know whether all fundamental legal safeguards were upheld in respect of detainees placed in overflow centres. An account of the status and functioning of those centres would be useful. With reference to the inadmissibility of statements extracted through torture, he would appreciate updated information on the application of article 159 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and examples of any relevant recent court rulings.

31. **Mr. Kessing** said that he would welcome a response to the question he had posed at the previous meeting regarding the number of persons extradited over the previous three years on the basis of a red notice from the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and whether legal and procedural safeguards applied to persons detained pending extradition. He would be interested to know how the use of alternatives to detention functioned in practice. In particular, he was curious to learn more about how the judge presiding over the case against Ahmad Hassan Zu'bi had reportedly decided to deny a request for a non-custodial sentence. Lastly, it was not clear to him whether juveniles held on drug-related or terrorism charges in centres operated by the General Intelligence Directorate had access to a lawyer.

32. **Ms. Racu** said that she wished to receive detailed information on the policies, strategies and measures that were in place to prevent gender-based violence and harmful practices such as virginity tests, which were reportedly performed in some prisons. She would also welcome further details of the protection afforded to victims of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. Reports received by the Committee indicated that the number of shelters was insufficient and that rehabilitation services were difficult to access in many parts of the country.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.20 p.m.

33. **A representative of Jordan** said that a standing committee on human rights had been established in 2006. Presided over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprising representatives of several ministries and authorities, including the General Intelligence Directorate, it was responsible for the drafting of reports to international human rights bodies and interacting with all relevant international mechanisms, including special procedure mandate holders, and international NGOs. Its work also intersected with that of other national committees focused on issues such as the empowerment of women and the prevention of trafficking in persons. The standing committee engaged with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) office in Amman and ensured the dissemination of the recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies.

34. **A representative of Jordan** said that, against the backdrop of conflicts and rising numbers of refugees, comprehensive solutions must be found to address the political, security and humanitarian aspects of refugee crises. The burden of hosting refugees must be shared, and Jordan, which hosted the largest number of refugees in the world proportionate to its population, was an example to be followed in that regard. In his opening remarks at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, which Jordan had co-convened, the King had spoken of his vision of ensuring a dignified life for refugees through the provision of health, education, employment and other services. That vision was given effect through the efforts of the competent authorities and the good-hearted citizens of Jordan, reflecting the Government's commitment to upholding its international obligations.

35. **A representative of Jordan** said that blood money payments were calculated in line with the level of harm inflicted and that their use did not deprive victims of the right to receive all relevant support. Court decisions on blood money were issued once a conviction had been secured and following due consideration of the sentence imposed. Blood money payments, which did not replace the enforcement of a sentence or give rise to impunity, were subject to legislative and judicial safeguards. The practice of blood money payments predated his country's accession to the Convention and formed part of the Government's implementation thereof.

36. **A representative of Jordan** said that, in respect of children in conflict with the law, the legislation in force provided for the settlement of disputes through restorative justice, which was carried out in full compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and could be entrusted to someone outside the judiciary where appropriate, and rehabilitation, which entailed the identification of alternatives to detention.

37. In the Juvenile Justice Act, a distinction was made between children in conflict with the law and children in need of protection; the latter were afforded alternative measures. The Act also stipulated that minors must not be physically harmed; under the Code of Criminal Procedure, any statements made by children who had been subjected to harm were inadmissible. Information on such cases would be provided in writing.

38. Extradition procedures were regulated by law and governed by bilateral, regional and international mutual legal assistance agreements, as applicable. Extradition was not permitted if there were grounds to suspect that the person in question might be subjected to torture in the requesting State.

39. Alternatives to custodial sentences were determined by a judge based on, inter alia, the type of offence, the character of the perpetrator and societal considerations.

40. **A representative of Jordan** said that detainees were transferred to overflow centres to alleviate overcrowding. Agreements had been signed with 19 public institutions, including the Ministry of Social Development, for the provision of services to detainees, including in the areas of education, training, employment, rehabilitation and psychological support.

41. **A representative of Jordan** said that a number of measures were in place to combat violence against women. The national women's strategy addressed gender-based violence, and incidents could be reported in writing or via a toll-free hotline. The national strategy to combat trafficking in persons included measures aimed at preventing sexual exploitation, which was prohibited by law. Signposting was available to ensure that victims received the support they required, and rehabilitation programmes were in place. There were shelters in almost all parts of the country.

42. Article 62 of the Criminal Code set out the limits and guarantees that must be respected when disciplining a child. No cases had been brought under that article. The use of corporal punishment against children living in residential care facilities was not permitted.

43. **A representative of Jordan** said that instances of cybercrime had increased sixfold since 2016. The Cybercrime Act had been adopted with the aims of tackling child pornography, protecting women, children and persons with disabilities and combating all forms of online criminal behaviour, including fraud, hacking, the incitement of hatred and the illegal sale of weapons. The Act imposed heavier penalties on perpetrators who engaged in the sexual exploitation of persons with a mental impairment.

44. The Constitution promoted tolerance, the rule of law and the right to a private life. Criticism was protected as part of the right to freedom of opinion, while defamation and calumny were prohibited. Journalists were permitted to undertake their work while respecting the laws in force. Social order must be preserved.

45. **A representative of Jordan** said that the King had requested the National Centre for Human Rights to examine the impact of the Cybercrime Act. The Centre had invited a number of national institutions, including public and academic bodies, and other stakeholders to contribute to its study.

46. **A representative of Jordan** said that Jordan respected its international obligations and was committed to continuing its cooperation with United Nations bodies. The Government would strive to implement the required political and administrative reforms and to take all necessary measures to prevent torture and uphold human rights.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.