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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 23 October 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to present its candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the term 2014-2016 at the elections scheduled for 12 November 2013.

The Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations also has the honour to transmit herewith the aide memoire containing Jordan's pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).



Annex to the note verbale dated 23 October 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Voluntary pledges and commitments of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan candidature to the Human Rights Council (2014-2016), in accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#)

I. Introduction

Having served for two terms as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2006 to 2012, Jordan has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2014-2016 at the elections to be held by the General Assembly in 2013.

The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all continues to be a high priority for Jordan. This commitment has been reaffirmed on many occasions by the Jordanian leadership at the highest level.

Since 2006, Jordan has exerted continuous efforts to promote constructive dialogue and cooperation in all fields of human rights and has contributed effectively to the work of the Human Rights Council.

II. Domestic reform in the field of human rights

Jordan continues to develop its legislative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with human rights law and standards. The safeguarding and enhancement of human rights have played a significant role in the Jordan reform process and continue to be vital to the democratization process.

A number of guarantees that ensures respect for and protection of human rights strengthens the observance of these rights and assures their effective enjoyment. These guarantees include:

1. The Jordanian Constitution:
 - A. The Jordanian Constitution is a key document that guarantees protection of the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms. The Constitution protects and promotes the rights of all Jordanians, including minorities, by stipulating that “Jordanians shall be equal before the law irrespective of their race, language or religion”. Its provisions are consistent with human rights principles and standards and the international instruments in which these rights are enshrined.
 - B. More than one third of the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution were amended in 2011 to reinforce the concept of the separation and balance of powers and to prevent the predominance of one over the other, in addition to strengthening the concept of respecting human rights and protecting fundamental freedoms.
 - C. The new amendments of the constitution have reinforced political freedoms and the ability of citizens to take part in political life contentedly through the following:

- The establishment of the “Constitutional Court” entrusted with interpreting the Constitution and examining the constitutional legality of laws and regulations.
 - The establishment of the “Independent Election Commission” for managing and supervising all phases of the electoral process to ensure that elections will meet the highest standards of integrity, fairness and transparency.
 - The creation of the “National Integrity Commission” in fulfilment of royal directives to institutionalize combating corruption, to enhance the confidence of Jordanians in the State’s ability to deter and eliminate corruption, and to ensure transparency and accountability.
 - The enactment of an electoral law that adopts the concept of proportional representation on the national level to pave the way for consolidating partisan work and spreading democratic culture.
 - The establishment of a “Privatization Review Committee” on the basis of Jordanian faith in the future and the need to adopt a model of transparency and full disclosure in respect of all past Government policies and programmes in order to reinforce public confidence in State institutions and to inform future policy development.
 - The enactment of the “Public Assembly Law”, which guarantees the freedom to carry out protests without prior approval from the executive branch of the Government.
 - The amendment of the “Political Parties Law”, which encourages and supports the establishment of national political parties.
- D. In addition to the above-mentioned amendments, the amended constitution also introduced further guarantees for civil rights and freedoms such as:
- Ensuring equality among all citizens.
 - Reinforcing the protection of rights and freedoms by punishing any infringement on the rights and freedoms, including by criminalizing torture.
 - Civilians will not be tried in any court whose judges are not civilians; the mandate of the State Security Court will be limited to treason, espionage, terrorism, drugs and currency counterfeit crimes.
 - Reinforcing the protection of freedom of the press, to include all forms and outlets of mass media, and freedom of expression.
 - Guaranteeing the freedom of scientific research and intellectual property.
2. Jordan has also taken important measures to protect civil and political rights such as:
- The National Human Rights Centre was set up as an independent body tasked at the national level to protect human rights, promote its culture, monitor its status, provide legal consultations and assistance, handle complaints, and observe human rights violations with a view to ending them and eliminating their effects.
 - The Office of the Ombudsman was established pursuant to Act No. 11 of 2008, issued on 16 April 2008, as an independent monitoring mechanism that

protects the rights of persons wishing to bring a grievance against decisions of the administrative authorities.

- The Ministry of Political Development was set up to support the political reform process and raise public awareness of democratic and human rights issues.
- A Standing Human Rights Committee was formed comprising members from a number of ministries and institutions responsible for promoting human rights and following up on international reports about Jordan.
- Human rights departments have been set up in several ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior and Justice; a Special Human Rights Department has also been established at the Public Security Directorate to consider complaints about violations committed by personnel of the directorate.
- Judicial inspections of detention and reform centres have been undertaken to ensure that no one is being detained illegally and to verify the treatment afforded to prisoners.
- A number of laws governing political life have been adopted after consultations with different segments of the society through the National Dialogue Committee and the Lower House of Parliament to reach the highest level possible of national consensus.

III. Cooperation with the Human Rights Council

Since the early stages of the reform of the United Nations, Jordan has strongly supported the proposal to establish the Human Rights Council. Jordan believes that such machinery should ensure, in the most effective manner, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular by addressing all situations of human rights violations and preventing their recurrence.

Jordan has been an active and fully involved founding member of the Human Rights Council and, throughout the years since the establishment of the Council, has played a vital role in the formation of its work.

During the first year of the life of the Council, the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations served as one of the Vice-Chairs as well as the Rapporteur. Jordan's full involvement can also be seen in the following contributions it has made:

- President and Special Rapporteur of the first Social Forum of the Human Rights Council
- Chair of the Working Group on Situations
- Chair of the Meeting of States parties for the election of members to the Committee against Torture
- Facilitator for the establishment of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee
- The Permanent Representative of Jordan is currently a member of the Consultative Group for the year 2013

- Jordan is currently the coordinator for human rights of the Asian Group for the year 2013

Jordan has always joined consensus on all major substantial issues considered by the Council. Furthermore, Jordan gives special attention to the activities of the Council. The fact that Jordan is now seeking re-election is an additional evidence of Jordan's keen interest in the work of this body and in the main role of the Council as an institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.

IV. Jordan's commitment to international human rights instruments and support for the United Nations human rights machinery

Jordan is a State party to fundamental international human rights instruments; in this regard, Jordan is currently taking steps to perfect its legislative policy in a manner consistent with its international treaty obligations.

Jordan ratified the two pillars of the international covenants, namely, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as far back as 1977.

Jordan was the first Arab country to ratify the International Criminal Court Statute and was among the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Jordan was among the first 20 States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008.

Jordan has withdrawn its reservation on paragraph 4 of article 15 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This was part of a national plan to combat discrimination against women, while, admittedly, more needs to be done. No country has yet succeeded in eliminating all dimensions of gender discrimination, and Jordan is no exception.

The Government of Jordan extended an open invitation to all special procedures mandate holders to visit Jordan in the context of discharging their mandates. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, visited Jordan in November 2011. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief also visited Jordan in September 2013. Jordan continues to work closely and cooperatively with the Human Rights Council members and mechanisms, and all other stakeholders.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Jordan in March 2011. During her visit, she met with His Majesty the King and several Jordanian high-ranking officials. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights also visited Jordan in November 2012 and participated in the eleventh International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions.

V. Universal periodic review

In May 2009, Jordan successfully passed the universal periodic review procedure. Jordan believes that it offered a thorough and objective assessment of the situation of human rights in Jordan; work is currently under way on the implementation of the universal periodic review recommendations approved by Jordan.

Jordan's second cycle of the universal periodic review will be conducted in October 2013.

VI. Future commitments and pledges

Jordan will:

- Continue efforts to strengthen the implementation of human rights instruments already ratified by Jordan.
 - Continue to work together with civil society organizations for the promotion and protection of human rights.
 - Strengthen efforts to promote and protect the rights of women, children and disabled persons, so that they can equally enjoy their human rights.
 - Enhance human rights education and training to further promote awareness of and respect for human rights.
 - Continue to promote democracy and the rule of law, to improve institutions for democracy and to further protect civil and political rights.
 - Continue to take an active role in the work of the Human Rights Council.
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