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The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and with reference to the request of Mrs. Dubravka Simonovic, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and Consequences, regarding information on the gender based discrimination against women journalists, has the honour to attach a copy of the response from the competent Jordanian authorities.

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 16th March 2020

Mrs. Dubravka Simonovic
Special Rapporteur on Violence against women,
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Response of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) to the request of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on the gender based discrimination against women journalists.

Please indicate whether there are cases of GBV and harassment against women journalist in your country. If so, please specify how these cases are documented, and describe the State response, or lack thereof, to such cases, including examples of good practices.

In 2018 an Assessment Report has been conducted on the status of Women journalists at Jordan's media institutions¹ by International Media Support. According to the study about 42% of women journalists reported that they had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment in the workplace, primarily by their direct manager, colleague, instructor or radio director at the university; 45% of respondents said harassment has rendered the working environment threatening for women journalists, to the point where they might quit; 47% of women journalists said they had been verbally or physically harassed while performing work outside the office or commuting to and from work or college.

Violent cases against journalists are being documented by the journalist's freedom committee of the Jordan Press Association. This Committee is mandated to document cases of all types of violence and facilitate those cases in courts and other public authorities, including police department.

It is important to mention that according to definition of the article 2 paragraph C of the Press and Publication Law of 1998 and its Amendments as of 2007²: "Journalist is every person registered as member of the Jordan Press Association and takes journalism as a profession according to its law provisions". According to this definition that only journalists that have permanent membership in the Jordan Press Association are under protection of this institution. The abovementioned law envisages rights and duties of journalists and protects their rights to freely exercise their profession (Article 8). However, this law doesn't mention protection measure for journalists being subjected violence or discrimination based on gender.

There is no a stand-alone law(s) or regulations that protect (women) journalists from discrimination and harassment, safeguard their rights and ensure them justice by holding perpetrators to account.

Jordan's Penal Code No. 16 from 1960, which was amended in 2017 does not explicitly mention sexual harassment. The majority of the Penal Code provisions are not sufficient to criminalise sexual harassment as an indecent act.

Article 306 stipulates that whoever proposes an immoral act or directs immoral words to a male or a female less than eighteen years of age shall be punished by a a jail sentence of a period not to exceed six months for whoever proposes an immoral act or directs immoral conduct, in words, action, gesture, or move, explicitly or implicitly, to 1- a person who is less than eighteen years old 2- a person, be it a man or a woman, who has completed eighteen years of age, without their consent. The amendments stress that it is not permissible to replace jail time with a fine in case of repeating the crimes mentioned in the amended version.

The Article 101 of the Jordanian Constitution guarantees the right and access to justice. Article (29) of the Jordanian Labour Law stipulates that the employee may quit work without notice and still retain his legal rights for the termination of service as well as the damage compensation accruing to him in cases where the employer or whoever represents him assaults him/her during work or due thereto by beating or humiliation.

All cases are registered in courts and classified as criminal, civil, and other cases in the Magistrates' and Courts of first instance or Juvenile Court, etc. However, the cases are not classified according to if they occurred as harassment against working women, journalists, or others.

Please indicate whether your country has early-warning and rapid-response system in place, such as hotline, online platforms or 24-hour emergency contact points to ensure that journalists and other media actors have immediate access to protective measures when they are under threat.

The Jordan Press Association³ operates a hot line through which complaints are received, as well as the complaints could be submitted through web page application.

The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ]⁴ was established in 1998 as a civil society organization working to defend media freedom in Jordan. This NGO serves as violations observatory, and through hot line receives complaints on violations and other related matters.

There are several other bodies that receive various complaints, including the National Centre for Human Rights, police, legal aid centres and the Jordanian National Committee for Women Affairs. The National Council for Family Affairs receives complaints on domestic violence and its leading a national protection team against domestic violence. Under the

supervision of the National Team for Family Protection from Domestic Violence, in cooperation with UNICEF, UNHCR and UNFPA a handbook was developed on *"Unified National Action for the Prevention of and Response to Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence and Violence against Children"* and a *Training Manual on Procedures* in both Arabic and English, to be a reference for all employees in all institutions on mechanisms for dealing with cases of domestic violence, specifying the policies and guidelines that explain the relationship and mechanisms to deal with cases of violence.

Please specify whether there are any programs in place aimed at addressing factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment in the world of work for women journalists, including discrimination, the abuse of power relations, and gender, cultural and social norms that support violence and harassment.

The Jordanian government has endorsed the National Strategy for Women in Jordan 2020-2025 (herein-NWS). The Strategy's priorities have been aligned with the Jordanian Constitution, national plans and sectoral strategies and took into account the government's priorities. The NWS set out four strategic goals and one of them is "To ensure a life free of all forms of gender-based violence". This strategic objective envisages to provide effective prevention and response measures to gender-based violence in the private, public, and digital spheres. This includes a number of interventions to ensure the availability, accessibility and quality of essential services and policies to prevent and respond to GBV; prevent and respond to gender-based violence in the family and address gendered power relations within the family structure that lead to GBV; and promote respectful relationships and rejection of GBV within communities and address the different dimensions of GBV in public and digital spaces.

Initiatives also include awareness campaigns on the prevention, response and reporting of gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment and cybercrimes; building awareness and capacity of media institutions to accurately analyse and report GBV data and address societal and cultural promotion and normalization of GBV, etc. An executive plan will be developed for the interventions, programs and initiatives implementation by relevant line ministries, budget will be allocated and M&E system developed in order to monitor achievements.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women annually undertakes advocacy intervention during 16 day annual campaign against VAW. The campaigns aim to raise the awareness of society about the phenomenon of all types of GBV, the importance of its reduction, the importance of reporting cases, and its social unacceptability, ending the culture of tolerance of violence, and strengthening the role of men, youth and girls in confronting violence.

Please indicate what challenges are faced by women journalists when reporting on cases of GBV, and specify whether there are any good practices in this regard.

The Report on the status of Women journalists at Jordan's media institutions⁵ found that women journalists that experienced sexual harassment first choice of where to file complaint (36%) was a union, an organisation or a government agency, rather than the

organisations where they work. This can be explained by the respondents' testimonies that there were no systems, mechanisms or designated parties concerned with this type of complaints in their workplaces to protect them from the consequences of reporting the incident. The reasons behind non-reporting are fear of losing their jobs, impact on their status at work, or even impact on their reputations, as some would blame them for the harassment. The second option was the editors-in-chief (17%), who demonstrated the lowest rates of harassment in the workplace. They may thus be seen as somewhat neutral persons, and their authority may contribute help protect women from harassment.

The percentage of willingness to tell a family member is much lower, reason being that they fear that the family, especially the husband, would exert pressure on them to leave the job. These concerns drive 19% of respondents to hush up and to live with the problem and continue working in the media.

According to the report, the overall rate of women journalists who had trust in the viability of such complaints was significantly low (13%), compared with those who had no trust whatsoever in the feasibility of the process (64%).