

Jordan

Question

In 2009, Jordan agreed to take further steps to promote an open and free press where journalists may report on a full spectrum of political, social and economic issues without fear of retribution. Could the Delegation of Jordan inform us of the remaining steps that need to be undertaken?

Recommendations

Canada recommends that Jordan:

1. Strengthen legislation protecting women and girls from forced or underage marriage and strengthen its penal code regarding rape, in particular by removing Article 308 and amending the penal code to remove the exemption of those accused of honour crimes from prosecution (Article 340), and strengthen the enforcement of this legislation, particularly in refugee camps.
2. Take measures to foster an enabling environment for civil society, including by amending the Societies Act (Law on Societies) to remove the restrictions on the establishment of civil society organisations (CSOs), eliminate the role of government in CSOs, including in appointing state employees to newly established CSOs remove the requirement for Cabinet approval of foreign funding for civil society organizations as well as any other undue restrictions and controls by the government on CSOs.
3. Amend the Press and Publications Law to promote an open and free press, including by broadening the definition of a journalist and by removing fines and the requirement for permission prior to publication, and ensuring freedom [stopping censorship and blocking] of internet media.

Observations (if time allows):

We welcome the steps taken by Jordan to guaranty free and fair elections through the establishment of the Independent Election Commission Act of 2012.

We are concerned about reports of the number of civilian detainees brought before the State Security Court, particularly peaceful protestors (including children) and journalists whose offenses did not affect state security. We note the King Abdullah II has called for an end of civilian prosecutions before the State Security Court, but to date this has not occurred. We stress the importance of civilian detainees being tried by judicial authorities independent of the security forces.