



**25th session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6 – Adoption of the UPR outcome of Jordan
20 March 2014**

The Human Rights Council's review of Jordan comes at a time of serious external challenges and government plans for internal reform. Jordanian authorities are currently undertaking legislative changes to realize priorities of King Abdullah's reform agenda announced early 2011, but the reform agenda has so far fallen short of making basic changes to ensure respect for the rights to free expression, association, freedom of the press, and an end to impunity for torture and other ill-treatment.

Though Jordan accepted general recommendations to improve aspects of its human rights record, it unfortunately announced it did not favor specific recommendations that would serve to bring it into compliance with its international human rights obligations.

Following street protests in 2011-12, Jordanian authorities have charged dozens of largely-peaceful pro-reform protesters with vague, politicized charges that limit their right to peaceful expression and assembly, especially penal code article 149, a terrorism provision, which prohibits "undermining the political regime or inciting opposition to it." In charge sheets reviewed by Human Rights Watch, the typical content for this charge concerned chants or signs carried during protests deemed insulting to officials. We regret that Jordan rejected a recommendation to amend penal code article 149 so that it cannot be used as a mechanism to silence political activists.

Women in Jordan continue to experience systematic discrimination in law, including in personal status issues and an inability to pass their Jordanian citizenship to children. By refusing recommendations to lift Jordan's reservations to articles 9 and 16 of CEDAW, Jordan missed an opportunity to take an important step towards ending this discrimination.

Furthermore, accountability for torture or other ill-treatment remains a major concern in Jordan, partly because these offenses are investigated and prosecuted via special police and military courts that have a long record of lackluster investigations, prosecutions, and sentences. At this time Human Rights Watch believes that no police or intelligence officer has ever been convicted under article 208 of the penal code, which prohibits torture. Jordan signaled that impunity for these offenses may continue by rejecting a recommendation to move jurisdiction of these crimes from special police and military courts to regular civilian courts.

We regret that Jordanian authorities took the approach to simply accept the more general recommendations, therefore missing the important opportunity created by the UPR to make concrete pledges to address important human rights shortcomings raised by many states during the UPR debate.