



# ACTIVITY REPORT JORDAN

## CSO submission workshop

7-8 February 2018

### Timeline for UPR engagement in the current cycle





Promoting and strengthening  
the Universal Periodic Review  
<http://www.upr-info.org>

## 1. Introduction

On 7-8 February 2018, some 50 participants joined the *civil society submission workshop*, co-organised by *UPR Info* and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) at the Dead Sea, Jordan. The event brought together an important cross-section of UPR actors, including: the Government of Jordan; the National Centre for Human Rights; civil society organisations and coalitions; media representatives; grassroots activists; the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The purpose of the two-day workshop was to build capacities on how to prepare quality civil society submissions ahead of Jordan's third UPR (November 2018). The workshop further encouraged coalition-building and information-sharing amongst national civil society with a view towards collective participation.

The event represents the first step in a series of UPR activities to be undertaken by *UPR Info* and its partner organisation FES, as part of the [in-country programme](#) for Jordan (2018-2019).

## 2. Activity

### 2.1. Overview

The two-day workshop was opened by Mr. Basel Tarawneh, Human Rights Government Coordinator of Jordan. Mr. Tarawneh welcomed the role of civil society in Jordan's UPR, and emphasised the Government's willingness to maintain a participatory and collaborative approach. These encouraging remarks offered a positive foundation for the workshop, and triggered frank and open discussion amongst the participants about Jordan's human rights situation.

Highlights of Day 1 included a panel session to discuss the progress and challenges since Jordan's second review. The panel speakers included the National Centre for Human Rights (Jordan's A-status national human rights institution [NHRI]), and representatives from several Jordanian civil society coalitions. This discussion, moderated by FES, offered a good overview of the *status quo* of human rights in Jordan, including what areas needed prioritisation in Jordan's third UPR. Following the discussion, the next training session brought together representatives from the OHCHR and the UNDP, with each presenting their role in supporting the national UPR process. As the OHCHR was represented by its regional office in Beirut, the participants benefitted from a thorough presentation delivered in Arabic describing comprehensively its role in the UPR. For its part, the UNDP delivered a compelling and timely presentation on linking the UPR with Agenda 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The complementarity of both the UPR and the SDGs is particularly fitting in the context of Jordan, as the country was one of the first to undergo the [voluntary national review](#). The

2030 Agenda can thus provide increased political appetite for UPR implementation where there are synergies between the recommendations.

Over the two days of the workshop, *UPR Info* provided three main technical sessions to increase UPR knowledge amongst civil society stakeholders:

- Effective engagement at the UPR; creating long-term UPR strategies and timeline of engagement for Jordan;
- Technical training on the content, format and process of writing UPR submissions; and
- Advocacy strategies: preparing advocacy factsheets; encouraging States to make SMART recommendations.

Day 2 of the workshop was particularly hands-on from the perspective of civil society. The first session saw the five main civil society coalitions each present a roadmap of where they were in their submission drafting. This was immediately followed by breakout sessions, where the participants divided into four thematic groups to work further on drafting SMART recommendations. The umbrella groups – identified by the participants themselves - were divided as follows:

- Civil and political rights;
- Socio-economic rights;
- Marginalised people; and
- Justice.

Each thematic group nominated a rapporteur to present its draft recommendations during the plenary feedback session. Numerous issues were raised in the session, including: the rights of migrant workers; nationality laws; the rights of refugees; jurisdiction of civilian courts over torture investigations; and the rights of persons with disabilities to access social services. The group work and subsequent presentations proved to be a highlight of the workshop as it triggered immense discussion and engagement from all parties. In particular, participants offered one another suggestions on how to make the recommendations more specific and action-orientated. This demonstrated that they had fully taken on board the technical training sessions facilitated by *UPR Info* on the importance of SMART recommendations.

The workshop concluded with a commitment to continue the collaboration both for the finalisation of the CSO submissions, as well as the next steps of UPR engagement.

## 2.2. Achievements

The CSO submission workshop provided a springboard to trigger UPR interest and cohesion amongst national actors, including Government, civil society and the media. The high-level participation of Mr. Basel Tarawneh, Government Representative of Human Rights, set the tone for an inclusive and transparent process, and represented a willingness on the part of the State to engage in UPR discussion. Similarly, the substantive presentations by OHCHR and UNDP further underscored the broad interest of international partners to support UPR efforts at the national level.

From the civil society perspective, the event offered an opportunity for existing coalitions to share experience with one another, and also to support the inclusion of new coalitions. In particular, the event was the first time a new coalition specifically focussed on the Jordanian

youth perspective was represented in the UPR process. The workshop thus offered the opportunity for the youth representatives to present their ideas with a collective voice and to be recognised as a legitimate coalition.

The workshop succeeded in;

- ✓ Providing a formal starting point for UPR cooperation in Jordan between national actors (Government, NHRI, civil society, and media);
- ✓ Ensuring gender balance amongst participants (43% women; 57% men);
- ✓ Introducing national actors to key international stakeholders (international NGOs and UN agencies);
- ✓ Sharing best practices for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into UPR recommendations;
- ✓ Laying the foundation for individual and joint CSO submissions;
- ✓ Identifying entry points to the UPR for journalists; and
- ✓ Introducing the UPR to newcomers, including new coalitions and grassroots activists.

### 2.3. Lessons learnt

It will be important to continue to ensure gender balance in all steps, and to promote female participation in panel presentations. Notwithstanding the ambitious and inclusive agenda prepared for the CSO submission workshop, further events should have in mind time exigencies and should prioritise technical sessions, where relevant.

Additional efforts can be made to encourage greater emphasis on cross-fertilisation and cooperation amongst the coalitions.

## 3. Way forward

The Group Rapporteur of each thematic working group and/or coalition will submit the information they compiled during the workshop to *FES*. This will constitute the baseline for the CSO submission. When the draft version is developed, it will be shared with *UPR Info*, which will provide technical feedback on the language and structure. The reports will subsequently be finalised and submitted by the national CSOs to the OHCHR by the deadline of 29 March 2018. After this stage, it is foreseen that the Government of Jordan will host a national consultation in April 2018, which will offer civil society an opportunity to share its priority areas of concern to feed into the national report.

## 4. Testimonies



*The workshop was tremendously enriching for me as I learnt about the status of national CSO coalitions, and their UPR reporting and foreseen activities. I further learnt about the need to draw on international expertise from organisations such as FES and UPR Info.*

*The National Centre for Human monitors the national human rights situation 365 days a year. Based on our findings, we draft specific and action-oriented human rights recommendations. In the UPR process, we will push the Government to work actively with civil society and genuinely commit to the review.*

**Dr. Musa Burayzat**, Commissioner General  
Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights

*The workshop was very helpful for me as a journalist and member of several CSO coalitions as it provided guidance on how to improve reporting and recommendations to the UPR.*

*As a journalist, I will raise awareness about the UPR among my colleagues and share with them how they can report on it throughout the various stages. Media must also spread the knowledge from the workshop to the public sector who are not members of CSOs. I also train students and young journalists and I will share the information from the workshop with them.*

**Mohammad Shamma**, journalist  
Journalists for Human Rights



*From the workshop, I learnt many things including how to use UPR Info's website to do research. I thought that the last session on strategic advocacy was very useful, especially the part about factsheets and to hear about the benefits of working together as civil society when approaching the Government.*

*Together with my colleagues I will continue to develop SMART recommendations and advocacy action plans for youth. The Youth Coalition will work together with other coalitions to raise awareness about the need for recommendations relating to the environment.*

**Hala S Murad**, Executive Director  
Dibeen for environment



*Through the workshop I learnt UPR techniques and knowledge from both the trainers and also from the other civil society participants. My expectations from the UPR is that it will be a means for us to highlight issues of torture and ill-treatment. We will be focusing on previous recommendations to provide information on what has and has not been implemented. We will also provide new recommendations, and our strategy for the next 5 years.*

**Fatema Dabbas**, Coalition representative  
Jordanian Civil Alliance against Torture (Jo-CAT)



*The workshop provided positive engagement between CSOs, HRDs, and activists, and I was impressed by the enthusiasm surrounding the human rights discussion. It was clear that there is commitment to participate in meaningful partnerships through the UPR. It was also important to note the willingness from all parties, including the Government, to receive technical support from UPR Info, FES and the OHCHR.*

**Ismail Zien**, OHCHR Representative  
OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa

*This was my first time at such a workshop, as I am a volunteer at several charities. It has been a great opportunity to learn from the trainers and other colleagues, especially women and youth representatives. I will be sharing the information with our charities, and I hope that we will ultimately raise awareness for our issues in Geneva.*

**Najah Rasheed**, Representative  
Grassroots women's movement





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