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Jordan

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

1999

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy that was ruled by King Hussein bin Talal from 1952 until his death in February. On February 7, King Hussein's eldest son, Crown Prince Abdullah bin Hussein, acceded to the throne. The Constitution concentrates a high degree of executive and legislative authority in the King, who determines domestic and foreign policy. In the King's absence, a regent, whose authority is outlined in the Constitution, assumes many of these responsibilities. The Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet are appointed by the King and manage the daily affairs of government. The Parliament consists of the 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and the 80-member Chamber of Deputies, which is elected every 4 years. The lower house asserts itself only intermittently on domestic and foreign policy issues. The 1997 parliamentary elections were marred by reports of registration irregularities, fraud, and restrictions on the press and on campaign materials. According to the Constitution, the judiciary is independent of other branches of government; however, in practice it is susceptible to political pressure and interference by the executive.

General police functions are the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate (PSD). The PSD, the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), and the military share responsibility for maintaining internal security and have authority to monitor the activities of persons believed to be security threats. The security forces continue to commit human rights abuses.

Jordan has a mixed economy, with significant but declining government participation in industry, transportation, and communications. The country has few natural resources and relies heavily on foreign assistance and remittances from citizens working abroad. The economy continues to suffer from chronically high unemployment. As part of its reenergized economic reform program, the Government has removed subsidies on several staple goods, lifted price controls on others, and streamlined government budget practices. Price controls remain on bread, pharmaceuticals, and a small number of other staple items. In mid-year, the sales tax was increased from 10 percent to 13 percent. Wages remained stagnant and continued to erode the purchasing power of most citizens. Exporters have not yet found adequate replacement markets for those lost as a result of U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Additional trade with Iraq under the "oil for food" resolution has not affected the economy significantly. High expectations that significant markets would develop in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel following the 1994 signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty have not been realized. Per capita gross domestic product in 1998 was approximately \$1,553.

There continued to be significant problems in the Government's human rights record. Citizens do not have the right to change their government, although they may participate in the political system through political parties and parliamentary elections. Other human rights problems include police abuse and mistreatment of detainees; allegations of torture; arbitrary arrest and detention; lack of accountability within the security services; prolonged detention without charge; lack of due process of law and interference in the judicial process; infringements on citizens' privacy rights; harassment of members of opposition political parties and the press; and significant restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association. The 1998 Press and Publications Law placed major restrictions on the ability of journalists and publications to function and report freely; however, the 1999 Press and Publications Law, which became effective on October 16, reduced these restrictions somewhat. The Government imposes some limits on freedom of religion, and there is official and societal discrimination against adherents of the Baha'i Faith. Early in the year, the evangelical Christian community reported an increased incidence of governmental harassment. There are some restrictions on freedom of movement. Violence against women, restrictions on women's rights, and societal discrimination against women are problems. The law still allows for reduced punishments for violent "honor crimes" against women for alleged immoral acts. Child abuse remains a problem, and discrimination against Palestinians persists. Abuse of foreign servants is a problem.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 -- Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killings

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There were no reports of political or other extrajudicial killings by government officials.

In May Mahmoud Rashid Qasem Mohammed Ishtayeh died in a hospital while in police custody. In August his family claimed that he died of injuries suffered in a beating; however, prison officials maintained that Ishtayeh died of natural causes. Human rights sources were unable to uncover any evidence to support the family's claims or refute the Government's position.

The security services continue to be reluctant to conduct transparent investigations into allegations of wrongful deaths that occurred in previous years during police detention.

There was no further investigation of the March 1998 incidents in which Masaeed tribesmen were killed by security forces. There were no new developments in the killing of Mohammad Al-Khattub, who was shot during an altercation between demonstrators and security forces in February 1998. A subsequent government investigation stated that Al-Khattub was killed by demonstrators; however, the media cited alleged witness accounts that he had been shot by security forces while fleeing.

There were no developments in the investigation of the police officers involved in the alleged wrongful deaths of Ismail Suleiman Ajarmeh, who died in February 1998; Samer Muhammad Ziyad, who died in June 1997; Younis Mahmoud Abu Dawlah, who died in December 1996; or Mahmoud Khalifah, who died in June 1995. All four men died while in government custody.

Women continued to be victims of "honor killings" (see Section 5).

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearance.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Although the law provides prisoners with the right to humane treatment, the police and security forces sometimes abuse detainees physically and verbally during detention and interrogation and allegedly use torture as well. Allegations of torture are difficult to verify because security officials frequently deny detainees timely access to lawyers. The most frequently alleged methods of torture are sleep deprivation, beatings, and extended solitary confinement. Defendants in high-profile cases before the State Security Court have claimed to have been subjected to physical and psychological abuse while in detention. Government officials deny allegations of torture and abuse.

Approximately 40 cases of beatings while in police custody were reported to the Arab Organization for Human Rights.

There are believed to be many more incidents that were not documented.

Periodic detentions of foreign workers continue and allegations of overcrowded cells and physical abuse by guards persist.

Filipino and other foreign workers who were arrested at their homes in September and October 1998 subsequently were released. Senior government officials publicly took responsibility for the incidents; however, no action was taken against the members of the security forces who were involved.

Prisons and local police detention facilities are Spartan, and on the whole are severely overcrowded and understaffed.

Prisoners detained on national security grounds often are kept in separate prisons maintained by the GID. Conditions in GID facilities are significantly better than general police detention facilities.

With some exceptions, the ICRC is permitted unrestricted access to prisoners and prison facilities, including GID facilities and the recently reopened Al-Jafr prison. However, from late December 1998 through March 8, the ICRC suspended visits to facilities where security detainees were being held because the authorities refused to give the ICRC access to one specific detainee. Local human rights monitors are allowed to visit prisons, but complain that they are required to go through a lengthy and difficult procedure with the authorities to obtain permission for such visits.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The security forces arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens. Under the Constitution, citizens are subject to arrest, trial, and punishment for the defamation of heads of state, dissemination of "false or exaggerated information outside the country that attacks state dignity," or defamation of public officials.

The Criminal Code requires that legal authorities file formal charges within 10 days of an arrest. However, the courts routinely grant requests from prosecutors for 15-day extensions as provided by law. This practice generally extends pretrial detention for protracted periods of time. In cases involving state security, the authorities frequently hold defendants in lengthy pretrial detention, do not provide defendants with the written charges against them, and do not allow defendants to meet with their lawyers until shortly before trial. Defendants before the State Security Court usually meet with their attorneys only 1 or 2 days before their trial.

The Government detains persons, including journalists, for varying amounts of time for what appear to be political reasons (see Section 2.a.). Human rights sources reported that more than 300 persons were detained for security reasons throughout the year. This number likely underestimates the total number of detainees.

In January a student at the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) was jailed for 2 weeks and then deported to Egypt. In February a Sudanese national was jailed for 17 days and then deported to Sudan. In April a church worker for Campus Crusade for Christ was detained for 5 days and questioned about his religious activities (see Section 2.c.).

On his arrival at Amman's Queen Alia International Airport on May 17, Mohammed Nizami was arrested and charged with "lese majeste," or slandering the King, stemming from his purported comments on an Internet "chat" site critical of the Government. He was incarcerated for 18 days and his passport was confiscated. He was released on \$10,000 (7,000 dinars) bail and departed the country without standing trial (see Section 2.a.).

Upon arrival at Queen Alia International Airport on September 22, two leaders of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), Khaled Mishal and Ibrahim Ghosheh, were detained along with four of their bodyguards (all six are Jordanian citizens). The bodyguards subsequently were released. Mishal and Ghosheh were held for 1 month and then expelled along with two other HAMAS leaders, Izzat Rishuq and Sami Khater (see Sections 2.b. and 2.d.).

The Government uses the threat of detention to intimidate journalists into practicing self-censorship (see Section 2.a.). Typically, a journalist who has criticized a government official or policy is detained for 5 to 10 days. While in detention, the journalist may experience abuse (see Section 2.a.). Charges rarely are filed. Convictions are rare, but proceedings may last several years, with defendants required to appear in court regularly, only to be informed that another in a series of continuances has been issued in their case.

In June journalist Shaker Al-Jawhari was summoned to GID headquarters and then detained overnight. While detained he was questioned about his political writings, which were critical of the Government (see Section 2.a.).

In July journalist Senan Shaqdihi was detained for 2 weeks, during which time he was subjected to psychological abuse. He was accused of publishing items harmful to Jordan's ties with a neighboring country. He finally was released in August by order of King Abdullah (see Section 2.a.).

In August editor Abdul Karim Al-Barghouti was detained pending investigation of the allegation that he slandered Prime Minister Rawabdeh's son. He was released on bail 4 days later. After his release, he reported having been treated well (see Section 2.a.).

In September Azzam Yunis, the editor in chief of the independent newspaper Al-Arab Al-Yawm, was arrested in connection with the publication of articles by Shiekh Abdul Mun'em Abu Zant, a pro-HAMAS Islamist and former legislator, and was released on bail the same day.

Laith Shubaylat, who was sentenced in 1998 to 9 months in prison for inciting riots but refused a pardon claiming that he was not guilty, was released from prison in October 1998.

There was no further information on Basil Abu Ghoshe, a 21-year-old man who continued to be detained despite having completed his sentence in 1998, ostensibly for his own protection against threats from a rival tribe.

The security services detained approximately 65 persons, described in the press as "Islamists," during the year; this figure includes 15 persons arrested in December. These detentions were related to allegations of involvement in terrorist or strictly political activities.

The Government does not use forced exile routinely; however, Jordanian HAMAS leaders Khaled Mishal, Ibrahim Ghosheh, Izzat Rishuq, and Sami Khater were expelled in October (see Sections 2.b. and 2.d.).

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary; however, the judiciary is subject to pressure from the executive branch. A judge's appointment to, advancement within, and dismissal from the judiciary are determined by a committee whose members are appointed by the King. The Ministry of Justice has great influence over a judge's career and often subverts the judicial system in favor of the executive branch. There have been numerous allegations that judges have been "reassigned" temporarily to another court or judicial district in order to remove them from a particular proceeding. In one instance in 1998, in order to avoid a trial before the regular court of appeals, the Minister of Justice allegedly formed a special appeals court panel to try several counts against an influential member of society who had been charged with the sale of children to foreign adoptive parents. In February 1998, Judge Farouk Al-Kilani was forced to retire from the Supreme Court. Kilani alleged that he was asked to step down because of his involvement in the High Court of Justice's decision that rejected the legality of the May 1997 amendments to the Press and Publications Law. (The Court ruled that the amendments had been approved in an unconstitutional manner on an emergency basis.) Judges also complain of unlawful telephone surveillance.

The judicial system consists of several types of courts. Most criminal cases are tried in civilian courts, which include the appeals courts, the Court of Cassation, and the Supreme Court. Cases involving sedition, armed insurrection, financial crimes, drug trafficking, and offenses against the royal family are tried in the State Security Court. In 1997 the Parliament passed amendments to the law governing the State Security Court that effectively extended its mandate indefinitely. The amendments had been rejected earlier by the lower house's judicial committee as "undemocratic" and contrary to the principle of judicial independence. Shari'a (Islamic) courts have jurisdiction over marriage and divorce among Muslims and inheritance cases involving both Muslims and non-Muslims (see Section 5).

Most trials in the civilian courts are open. Defendants are entitled to legal counsel, may challenge witnesses, and have the right to appeal. Defendants facing the death penalty or life imprisonment must be represented by legal counsel. Public defenders are provided if the defendant in such cases cannot afford to hire legal counsel. Shari'a regards the testimony of one man to be equal to the testimony of two women. This technically applies only in religious courts but, in the past, has been imposed in civil courts as well, regardless of religion.

The State Security Court consists of a panel of three judges who may be either civilians or military officers. Sessions frequently are closed to the public. Defendants tried in the State Security Court often are held in pretrial detention without access to lawyers, although they are visited by representatives of the ICRC. In the State Security Court, judges have inquired into allegations that defendants were tortured and have allowed the testimony of physicians regarding these allegations. The Court of Cassation has ruled that the State Security Court cannot issue a death sentence on the basis of a confession obtained as a result of torture. Defendants in the State Security Court have the right to appeal their sentences to the Court of Cassation, which is authorized to review issues of both fact and law. Appeals are automatic for cases involving the death penalty.

In the past, defense attorneys have challenged the appointment of military judges to the State Security Court to try civilian cases as contrary to the concept of an independent judiciary. Military judges appear to receive adequate training in civil law and procedure, and State Security Court decisions are subject to review by the Court of Cassation.

In the past, the press routinely has carried details of cases tried before the State Security Court. However, provisions of the 1998 Press and Publication Law prohibit press coverage of any case that is under investigation without explicit permission from the authorities. The 1999 Press and Publications Law, which became effective on October 16, now allows journalists to cover court proceedings " unless the court rules otherwise;" however, this change in the law still has not been tested.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution requires that security forces obtain a warrant from the Prosecutor General or a judge before conducting searches or otherwise interfering with these rights, and the security services generally respect these constitutional restrictions; however, in security cases, the authorities sometimes--in violation of the law--obtain warrants retroactively or obtain preapproved warrants. Security officers monitor telephone conversations and Internet communication, read correspondence, and engage in surveillance of persons who are considered to pose a threat to the Government or national security. The law permits these practices if the Government obtains a court order. Judges complain of unlawful telephone surveillance (see Section 1.e.).

In May Mohammed Nizami was arrested for remarks about the Jordanian Government made in an Internet chat room (see Section 1.d. and 2.a.). Unlike the previous year, the Government did not block the entry of foreign publications (see Section 2.a.).

Section 2 -- Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the Government imposes some restrictions on these rights.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law, combined with the 1998 Press Association Law, impose stringent restrictions on the operation of newspapers. The Government also intimidates journalists to encourage self-censorship. Private citizens may be prosecuted for slandering the royal family, the Government, or foreign leaders, and for sowing sedition. Citizens generally do not hesitate to criticize the Government openly, but are more circumspect in regard to the King and the royal family.

The Press Association Law limits the practice of journalism to Jordan Press Association (JPA) members, potentially excluding dozens of practicing journalists from the profession. No publishers or journalists have been cited for violating the law. However, in August Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf Rawabdeh issued an order directing government offices to cooperate only with JPA members. In October the JPA voted to expel three of its members, who had traveled to Israel, for participation in " normalization" activities. Such an expulsion would have prevented these journalists from practicing their profession. However, the decision was never conveyed formally and, therefore, was never binding. In November the three men signed statements in which they asserted that they saw the fight against normalization with Israel as necessary, and the JPA dropped the matter.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law granted the Government wide discretionary powers to issue fines, withdraw licenses, and order shutdowns to control the editorial content of newspapers. The law prohibited reporting on criminal cases at any stage of the investigation into any case or crime without prior authorization from the public prosecutor. Details of court proceedings may not be published without a court's permission. Violations of this section of the Press and Publications Law entailed a fine of between \$7,000 and \$14,000 (5,000 and 10,000 dinars). The publication of a newspaper or periodical without a license entails the same fine. However, the 1999 Press and Publications Law, which

became effective on October 16, allows journalists to cover court proceedings " unless the court rules otherwise" and reduces the prescribed fine to between \$700 and \$1,400 (500 to 1,000 dinars) (see Section 1.e.).

It was illegal under the 1998 Press and Publications Law to publish news, opinion, information, reports, caricatures, or photos that disparage the King or the royal family, pertain to the armed forces or security services, harm national unity, disparage religion, offend an individual or harm his reputation, disparage the heads of friendly states, harm the country's relations with other nations, promote perversion or lead to moral corruption, shake confidence in the national currency, or feature false news or rumors. However, amendments that became effective on October 16 removed these specific prohibitions from the Press and Publications Law. Criminal law still places significant restrictions on what can be published.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law also provided that those who seek to obtain a newspaper license must show proof of capital of \$700,000 (500,000 dinars) for a daily newspaper, \$140,000 (100,000 dinars) for most other publications, and \$7,000 (5,000 dinars) for specialized publications. The editor in chief of a newspaper was required under the law to be a citizen and to have 8 years of experience as a full-time journalist. However, the 1999 Press and Publications Law reduced these requirements by half.

Persons accused of violating the Press and Publications Law are tried in a special court for press and copyright cases. Journalists also are prosecuted for criminal and security violations in connection with their work. Although a substantial number of cases are dismissed before trial, many other cases linger for years. The Government routinely uses detention and prosecution or the threat of prosecution to intimidate journalists and to encourage self-censorship (see Section 1.d.).

The Penal Code authorizes the State to take action against any person who incites violence, defames heads of state, disseminates " false or exaggerated information outside the country that attacks state dignity," or defames a public official.

In June journalist Shaker Al-Jawhari was summoned to GID headquarters and then detained overnight. While there, he was questioned about his political writings, which were critical of the Government (see Section 1.d.).

In July journalist Senan Shaqdih was detained for 2 weeks, during which he was subjected to psychological abuse. He was accused of publishing items harmful to Jordan's ties with a neighboring country. He finally was released by order of King Abdullah in August (see Section 1.d.).

For a 4-week period starting on July 17, the official government news agency, Petra, refused to provide news to the Arabic language daily, Al-Arab Al-Yawm, charging its staff with " unethical reporting."

In August editor Abdul Karim Al-Barghouti was detained pending investigation of charges of slandering Prime Minister Rawabdeh's son. He was released on bail 4 days later. After his release, he reported having been treated well (see Section 1.d.).

In September Azzam Yunis, the editor in chief of the independent newspaper Al-Arab Al-Yawm, was arrested in connection with the publication of articles by Sheikh Abdul Mun'em Abu Zant, a pro-Hamas Islamist and former legislator, and was released on bail the same day.

Radio and television news broadcasts are more restricted than the print media. The Government is the sole broadcaster of radio and television programs. The Government has commercial agreements with the British Broadcasting Corporation, the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Center, and Radio Monte Carlo that allows it to simulcast regional programs using local radio transmitters. Jordan Television (JTV) reports only the Government's position on controversial matters. International satellite television and Israeli and Syrian television broadcasts are available and unrestricted.

In May Mohammed Nizami was arrested and charged with " lese majeste," or slandering the King for allegedly making critical remarks about the Government in an Internet chat room (see Sections 1.d. and 1.f.).

Unlike the previous year, the Government did not block the entry of foreign publications (see Section 1.f.).

In a high profile case, Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh was demoted in July from his position as head of the Center for Strategic Studies at Jordan University, apparently as a result of his outspoken political views.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Government restricts freedom of assembly. Citizens must obtain permits for public gatherings. The Government granted almost no permits for demonstrations during the year and denies permits for public protests and rallies that it determines pose a threat to security.

The Government restricts freedom of association. The Government requires but routinely grants approval for conferences, workshops, and seminars.

The Government routinely licenses political parties and other associations. There are currently 23 licensed political parties. Membership in an unlicensed political party is illegal. The Government may deny licenses to parties that it decides do not meet a list of political and other criteria contained in the Political Parties Law. The High Court of Justice may dissolve a party if it violates the Constitution or the Political Parties Law.

Upon arrival at Queen Alia International Airport on September 22, two leaders of HAMAS, Khaled Mishal and Ibrahim

Ghosheh, were detained along with four of their bodyguards (all six are Jordanian citizens). The bodyguards subsequently were released. Mishal and Ghosheh were held for 1 month and then expelled, along with two other HAMAS leaders, Izzat Rishuq and Sami Khater (see Sections 1.d. and 2.d.).

Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for the safeguarding of " all forms of worship and religious rites in accordance with the customs observed in the Kingdom, unless such is inconsistent with public order or morality;" however, the Government imposes some restrictions on freedom of religion. Citizens may not always practice the religion of their choice. According to the Constitution, Islam is the state religion.

Islamic institutions are managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Trusts, which appoints imams and subsidizes certain activities sponsored by mosques. Religious institutions, such as churches that wish to receive official government recognition, must apply to the Prime Ministry for registration. The Protestant denominations registered as " societies" come under the jurisdiction of one of the recognized Protestant churches for purposes of family law, such as divorce and child custody. The Government does not recognize a number of religions.

Over 90 percent of the population are Sunni Muslim, and approximately 6 percent are Christian. The Government does not recognize religious faiths other than the three main monotheistic religions: Islam; Christianity; and Judaism. In addition not all Christian denominations have been accorded official government recognition. Officially recognized denominations include the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic (Melkite), Armenian Orthodox, Maronite Catholic, and the Assyrian, Anglican, Lutheran, Seventh-Day Adventist, United Pentecostal, and Presbyterian Churches. Other churches, including the Baptist Church, the Free Evangelical Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Assembly of God, and the Christian Missionary Alliance, are registered with the Ministry of Justice as " societies" but not as churches. There are also small numbers of Shi'a and Druze, as well as adherents of the Baha'i Faith.

The Government does not interfere with public worship by the country's Christian minority. However, although the majority of Christians are allowed to practice freely, some activities, such as proselytizing or encouraging conversion to the Christian faith--both considered legally incompatible with Islam--are prohibited. Christians are subject to aspects of Shari'a (Islamic law) that designate how inheritances are distributed.

The Government does not recognize Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Christ, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but each of these denominations is allowed to conduct religious services and activities without interference.

The Government does not recognize the Baha'i Faith as a religion but does not prohibit the practice of the faith. However, Baha'is face both official and societal discrimination. The Government does not record the bearer's religion on national identity cards issued to Baha'is, nor does it register property belonging to the Baha'i community. Adherents of the Baha'i Faith are considered as Muslims for purposes of family and inheritance law. Unlike Christian denominations, the Baha'i community does not have its own court to adjudicate personal status and family matters. Baha'i personal status matters are heard in Shari'a courts.

Non-Jordanian Christian missionaries operate in the country but are subject to restrictions. Christian missionaries may not proselytize Muslims. In late 1998 and early 1999, foreign Christian mission groups in the country complained of increased bureaucratic difficulties, including refusal by the Government to renew residence permits. One couple affiliated with the Anglican Church was accused of converting a Muslim minor to Christianity and ordered to leave the country. The couple stated that the minor in question had been attending their church for several months before they met him.

The Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS), a Christian training school for pastors and missionaries, applied in August 1998 for a permit to purchase land on which to construct a seminary and campus. In April permission was granted to purchase the land on the condition that JETS register and receive accreditation from the Ministry of Education. Pending such registration, authorities suspended renewal of the residence permits of all of the seminary's foreign students (who come from 14 foreign countries), and 2 members of the faculty. As a result of their association with the JETS, noncitizen Arab Muslim students have been deported or asked to leave the country. For his participation in the school, Iraqi national Hakim Ismael was jailed in December 1998 for approximately 2 weeks in a cell with 30 to 40 other inmates, many of whom had been accused of common crimes. Following his incarceration, Ismael was released and advised to leave the country. In January another JETS student, Mahoud Ali Mabrouk, was jailed for 2 weeks and then deported to Egypt (see Section 1.d.). In February a Sudanese national, Alaa El Din Ali, was jailed for 17 days and then deported to the Sudan (see Section 1.d.).

In November 1998, the authorities ordered the closure of the regional office of ICI, an educational branch of the U.S.-based Assemblies of God churches, for an alleged violation of the health code. Although an Amman court later found the citation to have no basis in law, the ICI regional director was nevertheless ordered to vacate the premises, from which Christian literature was distributed. In February 1999, the ICI regional director, a 9-year resident in the country, reapplied for a residence permit as an Assemblies of God missionary but his application initially was denied; no reason was given for the denial. The missionary's residence permit later was issued in May.

In April a church worker with Campus Crusade for Christ (or Life Agape) was detained on the campus of the University of

Jordan while leading a Bible study session for a small group of students. He was taken to a GID detention center where he was held for 3 days, questioned about his religious activities, and told to provide the names of individuals who had attended religious events with him. He was denied an opportunity to contact his family. After 3 days, he was transferred to a detention facility in Amman and held in a small cell with 40 other detainees, who all shared one toilet. The religious worker was released 2 days later after signing a statement that he would cease his "controversial" religious activities. He has since been barred from entering the university's campus.

The Government notes individuals' religions (except for Baha'is) on the national identity card and "family book" (a national registration record issued to the head of every family that serves as proof of citizenship) of all citizens.

The Constitution provides that congregations have the right to establish schools for the education of their own members "provided that they comply with the general provisions of the law and be subject to the control of government in matters relating to their curricula and orientation."

Shari'a is applied in all matters relating to family law involving Muslims or the children of a Muslim father, and all citizens, including non-Muslims, are subject to Islamic legal provisions regarding inheritance. All minor children of a male citizen who converts to Islam are automatically considered to be Muslim. Adult children of a male Christian who has converted to Islam become ineligible to inherit from their father if they do not themselves convert to Islam. In cases where a Muslim converts to Christianity, the act is not recognized legally by the authorities, and the subject continues to be treated as a Muslim in matters of family and property law, and the minor children of a male Muslim who converts to Christianity continue to be treated as Muslims under the law.

The law prohibits non-Muslims from proselytizing Muslims. Conversion to the Muslim faith by Christians is allowed; however, a Muslim may not convert to another religion. Muslims who convert to other faiths complain of social and government discrimination. The Government does not recognize fully the legality of such conversions. Under Shari'a converts are regarded as apostates and legally may be denied their property and other rights. However, this principle is not applied. Converts from Islam do not fall under the jurisdiction of their new religion's laws in matters of personal status and still are considered Muslims under Shari'a, although the reverse is not true. Shari'a prescribes a punishment of death for conversion; however, there is no equivalent statute under national law.

The Political Parties Law prohibits houses of worship from being used for political party activity. The law was designed primarily to prevent Islamist parliamentarians from preaching in mosques.

Religious instruction is mandatory for all Muslim students in public schools. Christian and Baha'i students are not required to attend courses in Islam.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The law provides for the right of citizens to travel freely abroad and within the country except in designated military areas; however, there are some restrictions on freedom of movement. The law requires that all women, including foreign women married to citizens, obtain written permission from a male guardian--usually their father or husband--to apply for a Jordanian passport. Authorities enforce requests from fathers to prevent their children from departing the country, even when the children are traveling with their mothers.

Jordanians with full citizenship receive passports that are valid for 5 years. Most Palestinians living in Jordan are citizens and receive passports that are valid for 5 years. However, approximately 150,000 Palestinian residents--most refugees or children of refugees who arrived from Gaza after 1967--do not qualify for citizenship. They receive 2-year passports valid for travel only. (In the period following the country's administrative and legal disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, Palestinians residing in the West Bank received 2-year passports valid for travel only, instead of 5-year Jordanian passports.) In 1995 King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation again would be eligible to receive 5-year passports. However, the Government has stressed that these passports are for travel only and do not connote citizenship, which only can be shown by presenting one's "national number," a civil registration number accorded at birth or upon naturalization to persons holding citizenship. The national number is recorded on national identity cards and in family registration books, which are issued only to citizens.

Following a successful lawsuit in 1997 by a West Bank resident who, prior to 1988, had held a Jordanian passport (the authorities had refused to issue the plaintiff a new passport), the authorities began to issue 5-year Jordanian passports to those who are deemed to be noncitizens of Palestinian origin. However, such residents do not enjoy the rights of citizens because they have no national number. All Palestinians must obtain permits from the Ministry of the Interior for travel between Jordan and the Israeli-occupied territories. Such permission is granted routinely.

The Constitution specifically prohibits the deportation of citizens. However, the Government expelled four leaders of HAMAS, Khaled Mishal, Ibrahim Ghosheh, Izzat Rishuq, and Sami Khater, all four of whom are citizens (see Sections 1.d. and 2.b.).

There is no law or statute that provides for the granting of refugee status to asylum seekers. The Government generally cooperates with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR must resettle refugees in other countries. However, in April 1998, the Ministry of Interior signed a memorandum of understanding with the UNHCR concerning the status and treatment of refugees. Under the agreement, the Government admits asylum seekers, including

those who have entered the country clandestinely, and respects the UNHCR's eligibility determinations under the refugee definitions set forth in the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The agreement provides protection against the forcible return of refugees from the country, and recognizes the legal definition of a refugee as set forth in the U.N. Convention. Since 1996 the UNHCR has held regular seminars to train law enforcement officials in international refugee law, including specialized courses for policewomen. The Government provides first asylum. According to UNHCR figures, 48,588 persons have sought asylum through the UNHCR, and in approximately 6,000 cases (approximately 14 percent), applicants have been accorded refugee status.

The Government estimates that over 180,000 Iraqis reside in the country. Since 1991 thousands of Iraqis have applied for refugee status and received legal and material assistance from the UNHCR. During the year, 8,633 persons applied for, and 1,174 were accorded, refugee status. The UNHCR also received applications for refugee status during the year from Sudanese, Syrian, and Libyan asylum seekers.

For one school year (1998-99), Iraqi children were permitted to enroll in school regardless of their status. However, for the 1999-00 school year, the Government reverted to its previous policy of denying Iraqi children admittance to school unless they were residents of the country or recognized as refugees by the UNHCR.

Over 1.5 million Palestinian refugees are registered in Jordan with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The UNRWA counts another 800,000 Palestinians as either displaced persons from the 1967 war, arrivals following the 1967 war, or returnees from the Gulf between 1990 and 1991.

Section 3 -- Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Citizens do not have the ability to change their government. The King has sole discretionary authority to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, to dissolve Parliament, and to establish public policy. Appointments made by the King to high government posts do not require legislative approval. Executive power is vested in the King (or, in his absence, in the Regent), who exercises his power through his ministers in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

The Parliament is composed of the 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and the popularly elected 80-member Chamber of Deputies. The Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to initiate legislation, and it can approve, reject, and amend legislation proposed by the Cabinet. A group of 10 senators or deputies may submit draft bills for consideration; however, in practice legislation is initiated and drafted by the Cabinet of Ministers and submitted by the Government to the Parliament for its consideration. Opposition Members of Parliament have complained that attempts by members of the lower house to initiate legislation receive no response from the Government. The King proposes and dismisses extraordinary sessions of Parliament and may postpone regular sessions for up to 60 days. By law if the Government amends or enacts a law when Parliament is not in session, it must submit the law to Parliament for consideration during the next session; however, this does not always occur.

The Electoral Law and the distribution of parliamentary seats deliberately favor electorates in rural and southern Jordan, regions with populations known for their traditional, pro-Hashemite views.

Over 500 candidates competed in the 1997 parliamentary elections, despite a boycott by Islamist and other parties. There were many reports of registration irregularities and fraud on the part of candidates. Restrictions on the press and on campaign materials also had a negative effect on the campaign, which elicited much debate over the fairness of the Electoral Law and its implementation. Voter turnout was significantly lower in most urban areas than in rural areas. Centrist candidates with ties to major tribes dominate the Parliament.

The municipal elections in July featured the participation of the parties that had boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections; however, low voter turnout necessitated a second day of balloting. The process generally was regarded as free and fair.

The so-called one-man, one-vote amendment to the Electoral Law was ratified by Parliament in 1997, nearly 4 years after it was first enacted by royal decree. The amendment allows voters to choose only one candidate in multiple-seat districts. In the largely tribal society, citizens tend to cast their first vote for family members, and any additional votes in accordance with their political leanings. As a result, the amendment in practice has tended to limit the chances of some nontribal candidates, including women, to be elected.

Women have the right to vote, and women's groups encourage women to vote and to be active in the political process; however, they are underrepresented at the local and national level. There is one female minister. There are three female senators, but no women hold seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Of the 80 seats in the lower house, 9 are reserved for Christians, 6 for Bedouins, and 3 for the Circassian or Chechen ethnic minorities.

The Palestinian community, estimated to be slightly over half of the total population, is not represented proportionately in the Government and legislature. Only 7 of 24 ministers, 7 of 40 senators, and 11 of 80 lower house deputies are of Palestinian origin. The electoral system gives greater representation to areas that have a majority of inhabitants of non-Palestinian origin.

Section 4 -- Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Domestic and international human rights groups investigate allegations of human rights abuses and publish and disseminate findings critical of government policy. However, the Press and Publications Law has restricted the publication of information about the military and security services, which, in effect, prevented the publication by domestic groups of reports alleging torture and other abuses committed by the security services. The 1999 amendments to the Press and Publications Law removed these specific restrictions, but restrictions still exist in the penal code.

The local chapters of the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) and the Jordanian Human Rights Organization (JHRO) are registered with the Government. The AOHR has drawn public attention to alleged human rights abuses and a range of other political issues and has pressed the Government to bring formal charges against political detainees or to release them promptly. It asserts that the Government responds to only about 10 percent of the complaints that it submits on behalf of individuals who allegedly were subjected to human rights violations by the authorities.

The ICRC generally is permitted full and unrestricted access to detainees, including those held by the GID and the military intelligence directorate. However, for 2 months during the year, the ICRC was not allowed to visit one specific prisoner who was detained by the GID (see Section 1.c.). As a result, the ICRC suspended its visits to GID detention facilities during that period. After the GID relented, the ICRC resumed visits to GID detainees.

Section 5 -- Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social status

Although the law does not distinguish between citizens on the basis of race, women, minorities, and others are treated differently under the law and face discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas.

Women

Violence against women is common. Reported incidents of violence against women do not reflect the full extent of the problem. Medical experts acknowledge that spousal abuse occurs frequently. However, cultural norms discourage victims from seeking medical or legal help and frustrate an objective assessment of the extent of such abuse.

Abused women have the right to file a complaint in court against their spouses for physical abuse but in practice familial and societal pressures discourage them from seeking legal remedies. Marital rape is not illegal. NGO's, such as the Jordanian Women's Union, which has a telephone hot line for victims of domestic violence, provide assistance in such matters. Wife beating is technically grounds for divorce, but the husband may seek to demonstrate that he has authority from the Koran to correct an irreligious or disobedient wife by striking her.

The Criminal Code allows leniency for a person found guilty of committing a "crime of honor," a euphemism that refers to a violent assault with intent to murder against a female by a male relative for alleged sexual misconduct. Law enforcement treatment of men accused of "honor crimes" reflects widespread unwillingness to recognize the abuse involved or take action against the problem. Sixteen such murders were reported during the year in which the victims were shot, strangled, stabbed, bludgeoned, and run over with vehicles. Human rights monitors believe that many more such crimes were committed but not documented as honor crimes. Moreover, most crimes of honor are not reported by the press. The actual number of honor crimes is believed to be significantly higher. One forensic medical examiner estimated that 25 percent of all murders committed in the country are honor crimes. The police regularly imprison women who are potential victims of honor crimes for their own protection. There were up to 50 women involuntarily detained in this form of "protective custody" during the year.

According to Article 340 of the Penal Code, a "crime of honor" defense may be invoked by a defendant accused of murder who "surprises his wife or any close female relative" in an act of adultery or fornication, in which case the perpetrator of the "honor crime" is judged not guilty of murder. Although few defendants can meet the stringent requirements for a crime of honor defense, that is, the defendant personally must have witnessed the female victim engaging in sexual relations, most avoid trial for the crime of murder, being tried instead on the charge of manslaughter, and even those convicted of murder rarely spend more than 2 years in prison. (In contrast to honor crimes, the maximum penalty for first-degree murder is death, and the maximum penalty for second-degree murder is 15 years.) Such defenses commonly also rely on the male relative having acted in the "heat of passion" upon hearing of a female relative's alleged sexual transgression, usually without any investigation on the part of the assailant to determine the veracity of the allegation before committing the assault. Defenses in these cases fall under Article 98 of the Penal Code. Women may not invoke these defenses for murdering a male relative under the same circumstances, nor may they use them for killing men who attempt to rape, sexually harass, or otherwise threaten their "honor."

On February 6, Hussein Suleiman ran over his pregnant sister Malak Suleiman three times with his pickup truck. According to his own testimony, he wanted to make sure that his sister was dead so that he could "cleanse his family honor." On July 27, he was sentenced to 1 year in prison.

On February 10, after providing bail for her release from prison, Maha Walid's father, brother, and uncle took her to the back yard of their home. They argued about her alleged "immoral behavior." Her uncle then shot her in the head and handed the gun to her father, who shot her twice, fired the gun into the air, and shouted that he had "cleansed his honor." On July 12, the three men were sentenced to 5 months each for the crime.

In June one judge broke with tradition and refused to accept the "heat of passion" defense in an honor crime case. The court sentenced Khalil Mohammad to 15 years in prison for the murder of his wife, rejecting his plea that he had killed her in a fit of fury, "because he already knew about her behavior in the past and did not kill her."

In December the National Committee to Eliminate "Crimes of Honor" presented leaders of the upper and lower houses of the Parliament with a petition signed by 15,000 citizens demanding an end both to crimes of honor and the legislation that protects perpetrators of such crimes.

The lower house rejected in November a government-supported amendment that would have eliminated Article 340; however, the Senate approved the same measure in December. The amendment was returned to the lower house for reconsideration. If the lower house again rejects the measure, the two houses would meet in joint session to settle the issue.

Women experience legal discrimination in matters of pension and social security benefits, inheritance, divorce, and the value of court testimony. A woman's testimony is worth only half that of a man (see Section 1.e.). The Government provides men with more generous social security benefits than women. The Government continues pension payments of deceased male civil servants to their heirs but discontinues payments of deceased female civil servants.

Under Shari'a female heirs receive half the amount of a male heir's inheritance, and the non-Muslim widows of Muslim spouses have no inheritance rights. A sole female heir receives half of her parents' estate; the balance goes to designated male relatives. A sole male heir inherits all his parents' property. Male Muslim heirs have the duty to provide for all family members who need assistance. Under Shari'a men are able to divorce their spouses more easily than women. Marriage and divorce matters for Christians are adjudicated by special courts for each denomination. Married women are ineligible for work in the diplomatic service, and, until recently, most women in the diplomatic corps automatically were assigned to administrative positions. There are five female judges in the country.

The law requires a married woman to obtain her husband's permission to obtain a passport (see Section 2.d.). Married women do not have the legal right to transmit citizenship to their children. Furthermore, women may not petition for citizenship for their non-Jordanian husbands. The husbands themselves must apply for citizenship after fulfilling a requirement of 15 years continuous residence. Once the husbands have obtained citizenship, they may apply to transmit the citizenship to their children. However, in practice such an application may take years and, in many cases, citizenship ultimately still may be denied to the husband and children. Such children become stateless and lack the rights of citizen children, such as the right to attend school or seek other government services. Civil law grants women equal pay for equal work, but in practice this law often is ignored.

Social pressures discourage many women from pursuing professional careers. Nonetheless, women have employment opportunities in many professions, including engineering, medicine, education, and the law. Women constitute approximately 14 percent of the work force and 50 percent of university students. Women's groups stress that the problem of discrimination is not only one of law, but also of women's lack of awareness of their rights or unwillingness to assert those rights. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported in 1995 that women who work in agriculture average 15-hour days and earn less than men. The Jordanian chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club gives seminars on women's rights and assists women in establishing small businesses. Members of the royal family work actively to improve the status of women.

Children

The Government is committed to children's rights and welfare in the areas of education and health. However, government efforts in these areas are constrained by limited financial resources. Education is compulsory until age 15, but children who do not attend school or attend infrequently are not considered truant. The law prohibits corporal punishment in schools; however, such punishment is known to occur. For one school year (1998-99), Iraqi children were permitted to enroll in school regardless of their status. However, for the 1999-00 school year, the Government reverted to its previous policy of denying Iraqi children admittance to school unless they were residents of the country or recognized as refugees by the UNHCR (see Section 2.d.).

The Government safeguards some children's rights, especially regarding child labor. Although the law prohibits children under the age of 16 from working, child vendors work the streets of Amman (see Section 6.d.). The Ministry of Social Development has a committee to address the problem and in some cases removes the children from the streets, returns them to their families or to juvenile centers, and may provide the families with a monthly stipend. However, the children often return to the streets. Declining economic conditions have caused the number of these "street children" to increase steadily over the last 10 years. Selling newspapers, tissues, small food items, or gum, these street vendors, along with the other children who pick through trash dumpsters to find recyclable cans to sell, are sometimes the sole source of income for their families.

Although the problem is difficult to quantify, social and health workers believe that there is a significant incidence of child abuse in families, and that the incidence of child sexual abuse is significantly higher than reported. The law specifies punishment for abuses against children. Rape or sodomy of a child under 15 years of age carries the death penalty.

Illegitimate children are entitled to the same rights under the law as legitimate children. However, in practice they suffer

severe discrimination in a society that does not tolerate adultery. Most illegitimate children become wards of the State or live a meager existence on the fringes of society. In either case, their prospects for marriage and gainful employment are limited. Furthermore, illegitimate children who are not acknowledged legally by their fathers are considered stateless and are not given passports or identity numbers.

People with Disabilities

High unemployment in the general population restricts job opportunities for disabled persons, estimated by the Ministry of Social Development to number 100,000. Eighty percent of disabled citizens receive monetary assistance from the Government. The Government passed legislation in 1993 requiring future public buildings to accommodate the needs of the disabled and to retrofit existing public buildings, but implementation has been slow. Since 1993 the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Social Development has enrolled approximately 10,000 mentally and physically disabled persons in public and private sector training courses. It has placed approximately 400 disabled persons in public and private sector jobs. The law requires that 2 percent of the available jobs be reserved for the physically disabled. Private organizations and members of the royal family actively promote programs to protect and advance the interests of the disabled.

Indigenous People

The country's indigenous people, nomadic Bedouin and East Bank town dwellers, traditionally have been the backbone of popular support for the Hashemite monarchy. As a result, they generally have enjoyed considerable influence within the political system. They are represented disproportionately in senior military, security, and civil service jobs. Nevertheless, many Bedouin in rural areas are severely disadvantaged economically.

Religious Minorities

In general Christians do not suffer discrimination. Christians hold government positions and are represented in the media and academia approximately in proportion to their presence in the general population, which is estimated at 6 percent. Baha'is face some societal and official discrimination. Their faith is not recognized officially, and Baha'is are classified as Muslims on official documents, such as the national identity card. Christian and Baha'i children in public schools are not required to participate in Islamic religious instruction.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The Government granted citizenship to all Palestinians who fled to Jordan in the period after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, and to a large number of refugees and displaced persons who arrived as a result of the 1967 war. However, most refugees who fled Gaza after 1967 are not entitled to citizenship and are issued 2-year passports valid for travel only. In 1995 King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation would be eligible to receive 5-year Jordanian passports. However, the Government has stressed that these passports are for travel only and do not connote citizenship (see Section 2.d.). Palestinians residing in Jordan, who make up about 60 percent of the population, suffer discrimination in appointments to positions in the Government and the military, in admittance to public universities, and in the granting of university scholarships.

Section 6 -- Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

Workers in the private sector and in some state-owned companies have the right to establish and join unions. Unions must be registered to be considered legal. The law prohibits union membership for noncitizens. Over 30 percent of the work force are organized into 17 unions. Although union membership in the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), the sole trade federation, is not mandatory, all unions belong to it. The Government subsidizes and audits the GFJTU's salaries and activities. Union officials are elected by secret ballot to 4-year terms. Although the Government cosponsors and approves the timing of these elections, it does not interfere in the choice of candidates.

Labor laws mandate that workers must obtain permission from the Government in order to strike. Unions generally do not seek approval for a strike, but workers use the threat of a strike as a negotiating tactic. Strikes are prohibited if a labor dispute is under mediation or arbitration. If a settlement is not reached through mediation, the Ministry of Labor may refer the dispute to an industrial tribunal by agreement of both parties. The tribunal is an independent arbitration panel of judges appointed by the Ministry of Labor. The decisions of the panel are binding legally. If only one party agrees, the Ministry of Labor refers the dispute to the Council of Ministers and then to Parliament. Labor law prohibits employers from dismissing a worker during a labor dispute.

In July in protest over a recent contract between the Pepsi-Cola Company and The Food Workers Union, 255 of Pepsi's approximately 1,200 employees staged an illegal strike. The company issued two warnings to the workers and then dismissed them. After the Minister of Labor intervened, the company reinstated all but 115 of the employees and offered a severance package to the rest. After this agreement, the Ministry of Labor continued to urge the company to reinstate the remaining fired employees.

In August the Jordan Cable and Wire Company laid off 20 of its 220 workers. In protest 100 other employees staged an illegal strike. A week later the company fired an additional 72 employees from among the strikers. Also in August, following

an intervention from the Ministry of Labor, the company reinstated the 72 strikers. In November the Labor Court ruled that the initial 20 layoffs were illegal and ordered the company to reinstate those employees. The company had not done so at year's end.

The GFJTU belongs to the Arab Labor organization, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, and to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

Unions have, and exercise, the right to bargain collectively. The Constitution prohibits antiunion discrimination, but the ICFTU claims that the Government does not protect adequately employees from antiunion discrimination and that the Government has dismissed public-sector employees for political reasons. Workers may lodge complaints of antiunion discrimination with the Ministry of Labor, which is authorized to order the reinstatement of employees discharged for union activities. There were no complaints of antiunion discrimination lodged with the Ministry of Labor during the year.

The national labor laws apply in the free trade zones in Aqaba and Zarqa. Private sector employees in these zones belong to one national union that covers both zones and have the right to bargain collectively.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The Constitution forbids compulsory labor except in a state of emergency such as war or natural disaster, and it generally is not practiced; however, foreign domestic servants often are subject to coercion and abuse, and in some cases work under conditions that amount to forced labor (see Section 6.e.). The law does not prohibit specifically forced or compulsory labor by children, but such practices are not known to occur.

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Labor law forbids children under the age of 16 from working full time except as apprentices. At age 13, children may begin part-time training for up to 6 hours a day, with night work prohibited. Ministry of Labor inspectors have the authority to enforce laws on child labor, but in practice, enforcement often does not extend to small family businesses that employ underage children. Education is compulsory to age 15. Families in remote areas frequently keep school-age children at home to work. Child vendors work on the streets of Amman (see Section 5). The law does not prohibit forced or compulsory labor by children specifically, but such practices are not known to occur (see Section 6.c.).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

On October 2, the Government implemented a national minimum wage of \$114 (80 dinars) per month for all workers except domestic servants and those in the agricultural sector. Workers earning the minimum wages find it difficult to provide a decent standard of living for their families. The Government estimates that the poverty level is at a monthly wage of about \$125 (89 dinars) per month for a family with 7.5 members. A study completed by the Ministry of Labor in July found that 18.7 percent of the population live at or below the poverty level; 1.5 percent live in "abject" poverty, defined by the Government as \$58 (40.5 dinars) per month for a family with 7.5 members. The Government provides minimal assistance to 45,000 indigent families.

The law prohibits most workers from working more than the customary 48 hours per week. Hotel, restaurant, and cinema employees may work up to 54 hours per week. Workers may not work more than 16 hours in any continuous period or more than 60 hours of overtime per month. Employees are entitled to 1 day off per week.

Labor law does not apply to domestic servants, who do not have a legal forum to address their labor grievances and have no standing to sue in court for nonpayment of wages. Abuse of domestic servants, most of whom are foreign, is widespread. Imprisonment of maids and illegal confiscation of travel documents by employers is common. Complaints of beatings, insufficient food, and rape generally are not reported to officials by victims, who fear losing their work permits and being returned to their country. Domestic servants generally are not given days off and frequently are called upon to work at any hour of the day or night. The law specifies a number of health and safety requirements for workers, including the presence of bathrooms, drinking water, and first aid equipment at work sites. The Ministry of Labor is authorized to enforce health and safety standards. The law does not require employers to report industrial accidents or occupational diseases to the Ministry of Labor. Workers do not have a statutory right to remove themselves from hazardous conditions without risking the loss of their jobs.

Trafficking in Persons

Although the law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in women, the practice is not known to occur. A 1926 law specifically prohibits trafficking in children. There were no reports that persons were trafficked in, to, or from the country.

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