



**Report Submitted to the United Nations  
Universal Periodic Review - Jordan  
31st Session  
Human Rights Council  
October - November 2018**

Submitted by: Dibein for Environmental Development  
Association Representative / Liaison Officer: Hala Subhi M. Murad  
Telephone: +962799640111  
Email Address: [hmurad.dibein@gmail.com](mailto:hmurad.dibein@gmail.com) [hala@dibein.org](mailto:hala@dibein.org)  
Website: [www.facebook.com/Dibein.Association](http://www.facebook.com/Dibein.Association)

## The Association

Dibein for Environmental Development is a non-governmental non-for-profit independent organization concerned with general environmental and social interests. The organization, established in 2010, is comprised of a group of environmental and social activists. It focuses on protecting the environment and preserving natural resources, in addition to seeking capacity and skills development to improve and upgrade the environmental reality. It operates in all areas of the Kingdom of Jordan. The association seeks to achieve its operational goals within the capacities and support available to it. It offers many projects and actions in the field of environment and community development to relevant parties, organizations, and entities, and it ensures to keep abreast with modern developments and mechanisms in the field of sustainable environmental and social development. The Dibein association believes in the values of joint action and does not implement any project, initiative, or activity unless it is a joint action with other institutions, associations, or individuals. Through its wide perspective, the association helps to transfer work on the environmental and social sector from the current method based on services and agriculture to the human rights method, on the basis of international laws and human rights conventions and mechanisms.

### 1. Legal Framework for Jordan's Commitments in the Field of the Right to Access Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

The Constitution does not include any explicit stipulations regarding the right to access safe drinking water and sanitation services. This, however, is listed under the right to guarantee reassurance, which is stated in Article 6/3 of the Constitution.

Furthermore, Jordan has ratified the main conventions related to human rights, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In paragraph 1 Article 11, the ICESCR identifies a number of rights that emerge from the recognition of the right to an adequate standard of living, including the rights to "sufficient food, clothing, and shelter." The use of the term "including" refers to the fact that this rights list is not intended to be exclusive. It is evident that

the right to water falls under the basic guarantees category to ensure a sufficient standard of living, being one of the most important basic conditions for survival.<sup>1</sup>

Jordan is committed to ensuring the right to water without discrimination (paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the ICESCR), equally between men and women (Article 3 of the Charter), alongside other commitments and rights stipulated by the ICESCR. Hence, the ICESCR prohibits any discrimination based on ethnicity, color, sex, age, language, religion, political or non-political opinion, national or social origin, wealth, lineage, physical or mental disability, health state, or any other reason that leads to nullifying or hindering the right to equally enjoying the right to water, or to practice this right. In 1990, in the General Comment Number 3, the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights noted in the past that even during times when constraints on resources are stringent, weak individuals in society must be protected by adopting targeted, relatively low-cost programs.<sup>2</sup>

It could be a good idea to mention the framework provided by the SDGs (esp. Goal 6) – for example, has Jordan made any commitments to implement the SDGs on the national level, including Goal 6? Did the issue come up during its voluntary national review for the SDGs back in 2017?

## 2. The General Framework of Challenges Related to Right to Water and Sanitation

The water situation in Jordan is clear for everyone. We are classified as the fourth poorest country in water. As the population increases naturally or due to refugees (whose frequency has increased because of regional instability as a result of successive revolutions in Arab countries, especially Syria), the water crisis has deepened. Jordan has become the third poorest country in terms of water security, and the per capita share of water decreased from 135 cubic meters between 2013-2016 to 74 cubic meters in 2017, according to reports by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The World Bank identifies the water poverty level at 1000 cubic meters a year per individual. In other words, Jordan is 88 times less than the poverty line, falling below what is called absolute scarcity of 500 cubic meters a year (Falkenmark indicator).<sup>3</sup>

A 2014 report conducted by the special rapporteur for human rights on the right to access safe drinking water and sanitation services emphasized the gap in Jordan's legal framework, as Jordan does not have laws regarding water. Since Jordan hopes to embrace the concept of water as a right for citizens and residents alike across the Kingdom, it ratified the ICESCR, which clearly stipulates the right of individuals to access safe drinking water and sanitation services. On the local level, the Jordanian Constitution treats individuals equally in terms of rights and duties, but does not have dedicated articles for water rights. The water sector in Jordan is regulated through a group of laws governing the Water Authority, the Jordan Valley Authority, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, and the Environment Law. We do not, however, currently have a comprehensive water law that prescribes water as a right for each individual, affirming the principle of access to water for personal and domestic purposes as a priority over other uses. To date, Jordan, has not proposed a comprehensive law for water, and the Legislation and Opinion Bureau has not had any draft law on its agenda as of yet.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Challenges to the right to access water and sanitation (?) from a Gender Perspective

Jordan gives water a great deal of importance and produces national strategies and plans to upgrade the water sector in general. However, after reviewing the majority of plans and strategies related to the water sector, we noticed that since 2011, there has been a complete absence of any talk about mechanisms, plans, initiatives, and actions that fundamentally include a gender perspective in water and water security issues. Nonetheless, gender issues affect and are affected directly by water security issues. Women and children are the ones who are directly and significantly affected by any disruption or scarcity in supply, or by bad quality of water. Global trends in water issues are heading for the integrated management of water resources that intend, in the first place, to involve everyone in decision-making related to water. In this sense it is crucial that have a complete participation of society in identifying its water priorities and working on innovative solutions to reduce different water issues. Women come at the top of society, and women's work can be quite sensitive to water issues. For example, the traditional practices of women in rural and desert

areas, who have dealt with scarce water resources for decades and who have considerable practical experience with gender and water affairs, provide important insight into the gendered water issue. In addition, women in cities have knowledge and information that could enrich the water management function in an integrated manner, giving it an innovative touch. This issue, however, is not on the mind of consecutive governments that manage the water issue.

Our Recommendations based on SDGs and 2030 plan especially goal 5 and goal 6, specifically in the following targets:

“6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations” , “5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life” and "6.6-B Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management " this supports the link with having more women involved in water policy)

#### 4. Foreign Labor in Qualified Industrial Zones

In its Annual Report for 2016, the National Centre for Human Rights – Jordan’s A-status NHRI – affirms that foreign workers in qualified industrial zones (QIZs), most of whom are women, do not have drinking water.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5. Sanitation

According to the National Centre for Human Rights, 68% of real estate is serviced with sanitation systems. However, the Centre monitored the plight of citizens in areas that do not have these services. They examined bad odors from cesspits and the spread of rodents, and found that the costs for pumping cesspits range from JD 30 - 40. They observed these difficult living conditions in the east neighborhood of Madaba Governorate, Dlail and Hallabat in Zarqa Governorate, and Al-Mansura in Mafraq Governorate. Furthermore, water and sanitation networks are not sufficiently available in Ma'an Governorate.<sup>6</sup>

## 6. Syrian Refugees

It is not possible to ignore the repercussions of the Syrian refugees to Jordan with regard to the right to water. We should affirm that one-third of Syrian families are supported by women.<sup>7</sup> These families often cannot provide drinking water, especially in the summer. Cultural and social factors represent a basic factor in women's access to water, as they occasionally must send their male children to the mosque, many kilometers away, in the hope of finding water. Buying costly water from tanker trucks depends, to a large extent, on social influence. Very often, tanker drivers give water delivery priority to their friends, who are mostly men. Hence, it is easy to ignore the plight that women must suffer alone.<sup>8</sup>

In some areas in northern Jordan, per capita consumption decreased to less than 66 liters due to the Syrian crisis. This decrease is worrisome because the scarcity of water exposes children and pregnant women to diseases, such as diarrhea.<sup>9</sup>

## 7. Recommendations

### 7.1 Previous recommendations

In the first and second UPR cycles, Jordan received a combined total of two recommendations related to the right to water and sanitation. The recommendations, made by Bangladesh, were as follows:

- Continue its efforts to ensure access to water by improving water services
- Continue to work to enhance access to water through efficient water resources management with the support and assistance of the international community

The Government of Jordan supported both recommendations, were they partially implemented, Jordan Government is trying to improve water services. However, conflicting powers between the different departments responsible for water and poor management need to be improved, but Jordan has made progress in reuse of wastewater and its efficient use for agriculture

## 7.2 Proposed recommendations for the third UPR cycle

Dibeen for Environmental Development petitions all UN Member States to take into consideration the following recommendations for Jordan's third Universal Periodic Review:

1. Enact a comprehensive law for water that ensures the concept of the right to access water in sufficient, safe and clean quantities, as well as sanitation services for all members of society, including the marginalized groups of women, children, refugees, and others.
2. Involve women and youth in the process of planning water management at the Kingdom's level, and discard the idea that official parties are the guardians over natural resources by involving relevant parties in this issue.
3. Introduce effective initiatives and programs to improve the water situation for all, especially marginalized and rural communities;
4. Include the right to water and sanitation in all plans and strategies related to human rights.
5. Adopt firm legal measures to confront illegal connection to the water network in the Kingdom.
6. Provide greater resources to ensure universal access to drinking water and sanitation, particularly in rural and remote areas

---

<sup>1</sup> General Comment No. 15: The Right to Water, (Arts. 11 and 12 of the Covenant), Adopted at the Twenty-ninth Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 20 January 2003, (Contained in Document E/C.12/2002/11)

<sup>2</sup> CESCR, GENERAL COMMENT 3, The nature of States Parties obligations, Art. 2, para. 1 of the Covenant, Fifth session, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural right A/HRC/27/55/Add , August 2014

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, Mission to Jordan March 2014, A/HRC/27/55/Add.2, 5 August 2014.

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Human Rights, Annual report of 2016, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Human Rights, Annual report of 2016, p. 123 & 137

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, International Relief and Development, Syrian Refugees Living Outside of Camps: Home Visit Data Findings, 2013, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Mercy Corps, Tapped Out: Water Scarcity and Refugee Pressures in Jordan, March 2014, p. 19

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, Mission to Jordan March 2014, A/HRC/27/55/Add.2, 5 August 2014, paragraph 15.