



# SUSPENDED FREEDOM

Media Freedom Status in Jordan

# 2018



# Suspended Freedom

by **Nidal Mansour**

Executive President /Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)

Media violations in Jordan declined in 2018, with only 68 violations recorded and a significant decline from 2017 where violations reached 173 ones.

This means that the index of media freedoms in Jordan should improve and progress effectively on the ground, and should be reflected in the practice of journalists for their work. Did we achieve this goal and is there a tangible impact of the decline of violations on the areas of freedom?

The fact is that this slight improvement in media freedoms has also appeared in the reports and indicators of international institutions defending freedom of opinion, expression and media. But the scene is in our opinion more complicated and complex. Journalists still believe that media freedom in their country is declining. They think that the governments use the legislations to impose limitations on them. Many media organizations face challenges in their continued existence and the forms and patterns of violations are markedly repeated.

Our conclusion is that media freedom has not progressed remarkably and in line with the rate of decline in violations based on the opinions of journalists in the opinion poll we did. None of the journalists described the status of media freedoms in the country as excellent, while 24% considered them low.

The pessimistic situation of the media dominated many of their responses in the poll. Some 76% believe that legislation constitutes a restriction on media freedom, and 61% believe that the government is not serious about building free media.

Not far from the frustrating voices of journalists, the package of legislation helped keep the situation "stay still" especially the Cybercrime Law. It does not conserve or protect freedom of expression and information. This law was at the origin of arresting and imprisoning journalists and activists in the freedom of expression.

The paradoxes of the Jordanian scene are continuing. The observed violations have declined, although the year 2018 was marked by the year of popular protests,

with opposition to and rejection of the economic and living conditions of the people and the increasing taxes imposed on them.

The media was present in the details of the angry public scene, and sometimes it was the victim of its insistence on documenting the voice of the street and its refusal to close its eyes on what was happening.

The review clearly shows that the most observed violations result from preventing journalists from covering popular protests, although these cases have declined when compared with 2017 and compared with the large number of protests.

If the law enforcement agencies were to deal rightly with journalists in sit-ins and protests, and if there was a "code of conduct" that required security guards to protect journalists' right to independent coverage, violations would then be reduced and we would have obtained very positive results.

The violations have declined and the scene has not changed radically since the freedom of the media is still blocked, and the State has not resolved its choice of moving towards freedom of the media, and so far does not consider it an ally to achieve political reform, consolidate democracy and build sustainable development.

The freedom of the media is still stuck between different visions, conflicting tendencies, and ongoing conflicts. We would like to remind about the famous say of King Abdullah II when he took over his constitutional powers: "The sky is the limit of the freedom of the press". The governments and State agencies didn't apply that in their action steps. The challenges to freedom of information are not only in legislation that they do not maintain, but also in the absence of strategies and practices that support and contribute to their advancement.

Social media swept the society, became irresistible, made public opinion, formed mechanisms of pressure on governments and their tendencies, broke the monopoly of information and prevented its flow, and at the same time raised uncontrollable and unmanageable chaos, spreading false news and sometimes promoting violence and hatred. In brief, social media has changed the concept of media and its mechanisms of action, and has set pillars for a country that are not easy to break or defeat.

Along with these transformations, there are those who work and bet on the fabricated media industry by detailing outdated laws and policies. All what they care for is to control and dominate the media and "discipline" those who rebel against their authority and do not accept the terms of their guardianship.

2018 was a different and a painful year where the media in Jordan faced difficult challenges. CDFJ was fighting to defend its existence after fabricated and false accusations that used the law as a cover for political targeting to limit its role and prevent it from completing its march to defend freedom of expression and information.

Without the fairness of the judiciary who declared our innocence and our irresponsibility of these false accusations and without the possible areas of understanding in the Jordanian State, CDFJ would have been a victim of these centers of power that do not want civil society to play an influential role in the defense of human rights.

The innocence of CDFJ and its persistence to work two years after this strenuous siege constitutes a victory for Jordan and the rule of law over "martial minds" who want to bring the country backwards, and constitutes a rehabilitation for the civil society, its status and role.

We still have opportunities in Jordan to adjust the tracks and correct the situation, and we are still able to get out of the pending truth. The margins of freedom available in Jordan give it the advantage of progressing and ending this situation of staying still.

The Jordanian state is aware that the time of control over the media has ended with the revolution of communication and its evolution, and whatever legislation it puts to impose restrictions on the new media world, it will inevitably fail, if not today it will be tomorrow.

The only option we have is to go forward in promoting media freedom, to ensure a flow of credible information, to contribute in building a "public media" that reflects the priorities of the society and to hold anyone, who violates the rights of journalists, accountable so the impunity stops.

We can overcome the obstacles in Jordan, to stop the hesitation, to leave forever the gray space that keeps us prisoners of the time that stopped. We are standing between two cases and two phases: we do not belong to a tyrannical dictatorship while we did not yet get into the train of democratic countries. Thus the freedom of media stayed still waiting for the political will to end the controversy, the tugging, and announce the decisiveness and the vulva.

## Introduction

It was not easy to issue Media Freedoms Status Report for 2018, even though we have been doing this for the past 18 years.

It is not because there's no need any more for this report, but for the siege that CDFJ went through from March 2017 until the end of 2018 after false accusations were sent against it. Eventually, justice prevailed. The court handed down its verdict and acquitted the Center for all false attempts and fabrications.

These exceptional circumstances that CDFJ went through greatly affected the ability of the team for Monitoring and Documenting Violations of Media Freedoms in Jordan "AIN" to monitor the violations of the freedom of information in Jordan. The significant decline in financial resources, due to the interdiction imposed on us not to sign any contract or project, prevented the researchers from pursuing their required role.

This difficult reality we have faced has made our mission even more difficult, but we have taken the pledge to continue defending journalists and expose the abuses and violations they face.

The "AIN" team affiliated to CDFJ had to start collecting the report sources and to start discussing them. The team also had to follow up the victims and to review and verify the available information and resort to brainstorming sessions with experts to compensate and complete the lack of information and build the full picture. We were able to finish this report that we submit to you even if it came later than usual.

This report is based on the investigative and analytical approach, using the tools of monitoring, scientific observation and content analysis, to adapt these methods to the nature and theme of the report. The report's team uses to analyze the monitored information and the rights based approach in interpreting violations against the journalists' humanitarian rights. It is also based on the United Nations contractual procedures aimed at ascertaining the state's respect and application for the international conventions and treaties.

The "AIN" team evaluates and collects information on violations against journalists and media and uses available ways and means to access the information they need for preparing the report. This, in addition to attempts to reach victims of journalists who have been subjected to violations and problems in order to verify their occurrence and to classify them on the basis of sound legal rights.

Through its preparation of this report, CDFJ tends to achieve one of its objectives of seeking to reduce the frequency of violations against journalists in the performance of their duties by focusing on:

1. The development of the legal classification adopted by the report, which came after a long-term test and practice of 8 years and based on the standards of international humanitarian law.
2. To care about studying the violating and defendant parties who are documented in the complaints and the communications provided by journalists when subjected to violations and problems because of their media activity, or in the monitoring activities of the team of the program (AIN).
3. Sorting violations that prove their credibility and their occurrence in the complaints, communications and monitoring process conducted by monitors in the (AIN) program to specific and clear criteria.
4. Developing of monitoring and documentation tools. The (AIN) Monitoring and Documentation process does not rely solely on access to journalists' victims to verify violations against them; it receives complaints and written communications from victims and eyewitnesses directly by journalists and media, reports of human rights organizations and institutions active in the defense of freedom of information, in addition to the self-monitoring process carried out by the unit by tracking what is published by the local media about violations of media freedoms, as well as research on social media.

In addition to intensive and rapid field work, the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, through the “AIN”, prepared the report using three additional mechanisms to gather information and assess the media conditions to compensate for the period that has elapsed before it recovered from feverish attempts to block its activities.

**The first mechanism** was to design a survey questionnaire on the status of media freedoms for the year 2018 for a sample of 100 male and female journalists, including their positions and impressions about a number of aspects of media freedom in Jordan last year. The questionnaire included inquiring about any problems or violations that happened to them. The (AIN) team was able to monitor problems and violations that happened to 20 male and female journalists, after the process of monitoring and gathering information with journalists and media people who reported that they faced problems or violations.

**The second mechanism** was for the (AIN) team to conduct a survey of a number of local media outlets that are accustomed to publishing violations of the reality

of media freedoms, as well as another survey about the sites of international and regional organizations concerned with the defense of media freedom.

**The third mechanism** was about organizing focused brainstorming and discussion sessions for journalists and experts on their positions, views and observations on three main themes: "Legislative and Legal Challenges of Media and Media Freedom", "Freedom of the Internet and social media and the Variables it imposed on the Media Scene"; "Professional Challenges and Life and Career Security for Journalists". CDFJ has been keen to involve experienced human rights experts and journalists in these meetings to listen to and document their views in this report.

This report seeks to answer two important questions:

- What are the international and domestic legal obligations and positions that Jordan should apply and enforce within the scope of freedom of opinion, expression and information?
- What is the reality of violations of media rights and media freedoms in Jordan in 2018?

To answer these questions, the report presented the following:

- \* General results of monitoring and documenting violations.
- \* Outcome of violations of media freedom in Jordan 2018, focusing on serious violations such as impunity, lack of access to justice and access to justice.
- \* Violators of press freedom and media rights in 2018.

The present report is divided, after the executive report and its recommendations into three main chapters, each with sub-sections, as follows:

**Chapter 1: Factors Affecting Media Freedom in Jordan 2018**, and this chapter comprises four topics:

The first topic: The political and economic environment that affected the freedom of the media during 2018.

The second topic: The professional status of the workers in the Jordanian media 2018.

The third topic: Legislation and its impact on media and journalists 2018.

The fourth topic: Jordan's implementation of its international obligations on media freedoms 2018.

**Chapter II: The challenges facing the media in Jordan – experts' vision -** divided into three topics as follows:

The first topic: discusses the challenges of the legislative and legal environment.  
The second topic: discusses the challenge of growth of new media and means of social communication.  
The third topic: discusses the professional challenge and economic safety net for journalists.

**Chapter III: Violations affecting the media workers.** This chapter is divided, which is considered to be the essence of the report and its largest chapters, into two topics as follows:

The first topic: includes a presentation for a random sample of journalists about their positions and impressions of the reality of media freedoms in Jordan during 2018.

The second topic: includes an account of the violations documented by the (AIN) program team during the same year 2018, including testimonies of the victims.

We believe that the future of the status of media freedoms in Jordan can only be determined by extrapolating the present and comparing it with the past to reach to its future image. That is exactly what the report is doing.



# The Executive Summary

CDFJ continued its activities in 2018 concerning the new developments on the media activity and the impact of that on the reality of media freedoms in Jordan, and was able to issue the version 17 of its annual report on the status of media freedoms.

The report documented 68 violations against 18 male and female journalists, in addition to one media institution. It stated 11 cases, including 8 individual cases and 3 collective cases targeting journalists in general. The most prominent of which was the harassment of journalists and preventing them from covering popular protests in the fourth roundabout area.

The report pointed out that what is remarkable in the violations observed for the year 2018 is the receipt of three cases: media activity and publication on social media, especially Facebook.

The report consists of three chapters, with sub-sections. This summary reviews the main findings and observations in each chapter of the report, as follows:

## 1. Chapter 1: Factors Affecting Media Freedom in Jordan 2018

The first chapter reviews the political and economic environment, the professional status of journalists, the legislations governing the media and its role, and finally to what extent Jordan implements its international obligations and the vision of non-governmental and semi-governmental organizations for the media situation in Jordan, as follows:

### 1.1. The first topic: The political and economic environment that affected the freedom of the media during 2018

The report acknowledged that 2018 was not an easy year for Jordan in general and for journalists in particular. Jordan has witnessed widespread protests that have been largely a rejection of difficult economic conditions or a demand for a change in the economic and political approach.

The report explains that "the large and unexpected protests led to a confused reaction by the existing government at the time; from the attempt to cover them up to trying to break their backbone. During these attempts, the media with its traditional and modern means was following and transmitting news. But there was also some who break cameras or raised the stick to intimidate those who vow

themselves so that people know the reasons for what is happening and its motives."

The report added that "the fall of the government of Hani al-Mulqi because of escalating protests was followed by the announcement of the formation of a new government headed by Omar al-Razzaz, which responded to the will of the street and decided to withdraw the tax bill of law for the sake of discussing and consulting with stakeholders. The new government did another positive step when it decided to withdraw the bill of law to ensure the right to information in order to introduce radical changes to it. This was followed by the withdrawal of the cybercrimes bill of law after it became a demand for the street, which sees that the next amendment to the law aims at shutting their voices".

The report pointed out that "despite the government's rapid re-enactment of the Cybercrimes Bill after minor positive amendments, the definition of hate speech remained unclear and the penalties contained in Article (10) continued to allow the arrest of journalists. The fate of amendments to this law is not known after it was rejected by the House of Representatives and was not considered by the Senate, until the preparation of this report."

In its description of the economic and political environment in which the media worked in 2018, the report said that "the spark that triggered the demonstrations was the proposed income tax bill, which has controversially increased the tax burden on social groups, especially the middle class and poor who cannot pay additional taxes, while their incomes remain stagnant and limited, and at the same time the government failed to provide them with adequate public services".

According to the report, US President Donald Trump's declaration of "Jerusalem as the capital of Israel" and his suppression of the support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has increased political tension and uncertainty about the future of a wide segment of Jordanians.

The report described the tense climate as of June 2018, which toppled the government of Hani al-Mulqi after the increase in the prices of oil derivatives within the monthly tariff. He was followed by Omar al-Razzaz, who, despite withdrawing from the income tax law, could not achieve a hoped-for calm. A team of Jordanians returned to sit around the fourth roundabout to demand political and economic reforms amid arrests among activists. While the Government warned, through the Minister of State for Media, "Jumana Ghneimat" of the opposition, which she described as "suspicious" trying to distort the image of the protests in Jordan on the difficult economic conditions.

"Social media played the biggest role in mobilizing thousands of demonstrators against the income tax bill in the fourth roundabout area in June 2018." According to a survey conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, about 60% of the respondents said they got their information about the protests through friends and social media, especially Facebook.

The report added that "As a result of this situation, a number of journalists and photographers were pressured to restrict and limit the movement and prevent coverage while carrying out their professional duty to cover the popular protests in the fourth roundabout, specifically at the Jordan Hospital Square near the prime ministry."

## **1.2. The second topic: The professional status of the workers in the Jordanian media 2018**

On the professional status of journalists in Jordan, the report said that "one third of journalists in Jordan, if not more, practice their profession illegally as members of the Syndicate of Journalists. Jordan does not know the principle of pluralism of union activity, hence it's illegal to create more than one union per profession".

"The Jordanian Journalists' Syndicate is the one who grants licenses to practice the profession, and therefore anyone who is not affiliated with the Journalists' Syndicate is considered as impersonating the role of the journalist; which is a criminal offense."

The report criticized the difficult conditions that the union of journalists imposes on accepting new members, which limits the number of members and makes it closer to a (club for elite) than to a trade union.

The report added that according to the Press and Publications Law, the recognized journalist is a "member of the Syndicate of Journalists" and this law prohibits non-union members from practicing journalism. The law of the union of journalists limits the practice of the profession to its members only, and the unilateral organization of the union contravenes the provisions of article 16 of the Jordanian Constitution, as well as article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The report stressed that the law gives to the Journalists Syndicate broad powers over the press and media sector in Jordan, which go beyond the affairs of its members and extends to preventing journalists from outside its umbrella to practice the profession. While the Press and Publications Law defines the

journalist as a practicing member of the syndicate, the Press Syndicate Law contains harsh conditions for membership that determine who are the journalists that are allowed to join the union, and thus are allowed to practice journalism.

### **1.3. The third topic: Legislations and their impact on media and journalists 2018**

As for the legislative environment, the report covered the legislative environment governing the media in Jordan and mentioned only six laws that should be reviewed urgently, seriously and effectively: the Press and Publications Law, the Penal Code, the State Security Court Law, the Terrorism Prevention Law and the Cybercrimes Law.

The report added: "Despite what the government announced in its report to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was discussed during the UPR review of Jordan 2018, in which it said that all freedom-related penalties for publishing crimes were abolished, the media body has been suspended after former media director Mohamed Qutishat assumed his responsibilities; however, the arrest remains the biggest concern of journalists, leading to self-censorship of their views and leading editors-in-chief in one form or another to be stricter in reviewing the media materials. The detention – which is holding someone without judicial conviction, even without obvious reasons, and can be replaced by other precautionary measures - which is considered to be arbitrary detention, especially if it lacks its accepted legal conditions, the most important of which is that the detention procedure is a precautionary measure for fear of escape or tampering the evidence, which certainly do not belong to journalists and not related to their media work. "

The report concludes that, in general, "the legislative structure in Jordan is not a friendly structure for media freedoms, and that there are numerous and extensive measures that the government must take, in cooperation with parliament, to improve legislative building in Jordan, and to avoid the clear contradiction between the laws, the Constitution and the international relevant conventions that Jordan has signed ".

### **1.4. The fourth topic: Jordan's implementation of its international obligations on media freedoms 2018**

Concerning Jordan's implementation of its international obligations on freedom of information and the vision of international organizations, the report, after reviewing the international conventions ratified by Jordan - including the conventions on freedom of expression – stipulated that "the fact that authorities

published a number of human rights conventions related to media rights and freedoms in the official gazette constitutes a recognition and a dedication to the principle that international conventions on human rights are enshrined in national laws and legislations, which legally and practically means that these agreements have become part of the Jordanian law in force. In conclusion, the courts should adopt them".

The report was submitted to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in response to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/250 of 15 March 2006 on the Universal Periodic Review, in which it monitors the extent to which the recommendations of the second UPR about Jordan have been implemented. The report went through the efforts of non-governmental organizations that participated in the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva under the umbrella of the Jordanian Civil Alliance, which included 6 alliances with more than 25 Jordanian civil society organizations; it also went through the parallel report submitted by the National Center for Human Rights; and to the parallel report submitted by CDFJ on Media Freedom in Jordan situations.

The report cited the CDFJ as one of the stakeholders of local civil society organizations in Jordan, which focused on "success stories and legal materials contained in legislation which constitutes a restriction on freedom of information, and the needed recommendations to improve the media freedom environment, in addition to monitoring abuses on journalists from 2013 to 2017 and recommendations to reduce them, and to prevent impunity".

The report mentioned that "the number of recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee on the third UPR on human rights in Jordan was 226 recommendations, of which the government accepted 131 recommendations, and then approved 19 other recommendations after reviewing them. So, the total of the recommendations approved and accepted by the government became 149 recommendations which constitute 66% of the total number of recommendations. Out of the 226 recommendations, the number of recommendations on freedom of expression and information was 7 as follows:

- Ensure compliance with all domestic legislation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, particularly with regard to the right to freedom of expression.
- Review the Press and Publications Law to ensure the full right to freedom of expression.
- Ensure a safe and favorable environment for journalists and media personnel, as well as freedom of the media and a space for civil society free from interference, threats and intimidation.

- Amend laws that hinder freedom of expression and information.
- Establish a committee of independent experts to consider amendments to legislations and institutions related to information.
- Guarantee freedom of expression and stop arrests for all writers, journalists and editors of websites based on charges relating to freedom of expression and repeal articles of the Penal Code that impose restrictions on freedom of expression, both online and through the internet.
- Respect for the right of journalists to freedom of expression by restricting the trial of journalists for "publishing offenses" provided for in the Penal Code to civil courts and by amending Article 11 of the Cybercrime Law to narrow the definition of hate speech.

## 2. Chapter 2: Challenges Facing the Media in Jordan - vision of experts -

The report presented in the second chapter the challenges faced by the Jordanian media from the point of view of the experts, divided into three main topics. CDFJ held a brainstorming session for each of these topics. The first session discussed the legislative challenge. The second session discussed the challenge of the new media and its effects. The third session discussed the professional challenge and the economic safety net for journalists as follows:

### 2.1. The first topic discusses the challenges of the legislative and legal environment

CDFJ organized a brainstorming session, which included a number of journalists, publishers, legal and human rights experts, to discuss the challenges posed by the legislation on freedom of expression and its professional and ethical repercussions, especially on journalists and media workers. Eight legal experts participated in this session including the lawyer Mohammed Qutishat, Director of the Jordan's Media Commission, as well as lawyers and media people. The most important outcome of that important meeting was the following:

2.1.1. The legislation constituted a limitation to the freedom of expression and to freedom of media. It has created a negative environment to the media activity. The majority of legislators have contributed in the past years to the decline in media work and increased the censorship of journalists themselves. They also constituted an obstacle to investment in the field of media.

2.1.2. The multiplicity of legislative references, including the Press and Publications Law, the Visual and Audiovisual Media Law, the Cybercrimes Law

and the Right to Information Law, may lead to confusing concepts, especially if some cases of publication are referred to the judiciary.

2.1.3. The legislations restricted the media work in the printed newspapers during the nineties when the weekly newspapers spread, or what is known as “tabloid” newspapers, and was subsequently restricted and narrowed the freedom of electronic media sites. The proposed amendments to the new law on cybercrime would restrict the freedom of expression on the sites of communication which would continue to restrict media freedom because of the possible integration of traditional media institutions with modern social media means.

2.1.4. The views of the participants in the meeting differed relatively from the viewpoint of the director of the Jordan’s Media Committee, lawyer Muhammad Qutishat. While the majority found that the legislations created many challenges to the professional reality of the media and constituted a restriction on freedom of expression and increased the self-censorship practiced by the journalists themselves, with the aim of organizing the media work and combating the discourse of incitement, discrimination and hate practiced by media institutions that lack professionalism and institutionalization, as he put it.

2.1.5. In general, many of the discussion points constituted an obsession to review the impact of legislation and regulations on the reality of media work and the challenges faced by journalists, media and publishers, which cast a shadow over the entire media scene, most prominently of the legislation on the reality of life and employment security for journalists and media institutions in addition to the fears of being subject to courts and / or arrest on the background of publications and publishing issues due to the legislative environment.

## **2.2. The second topic: discusses the challenge of growth of new media and means of social communication**

In the second brainstorming session organized by CDFJ on the "freedom of the Internet and the social media and the variables it imposed on the media scene," the discussions, which included a number of experts in social media and new media, ended in reaching a number of points, the most important of which are:

2.2.1. That technology always precedes legislation, and no legislation can restrict freedoms.

2.2.2. That the spread of social networking platforms raised the ceiling of freedom of opinion expression, and became a tool of pressure and control parallel to the

authority of the media, and worked to break the control of the Government on the platforms.

2.2.3. That the State has become concerned about the use of social networking sites widely, which constitutes a real threat to the freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the Internet.

2.2.4. The Government had resorted to the same mentality as the traditional professional media and used it to organize freedom of opinion and expression on the Internet.

2.2.5. The society places restrictions on the freedom of expression on the Internet, such as taboos and red lines, which are difficult to talk about, such as religion and sex.

2.2.6. The social media has changed a lot of traditional journalism methods, Internet media and social media have become a threat to the paper media, its future and destiny. Podcast, YouTube and Info graphic programs have revolutionized the news and their presentation, especially as users turn to visual news much more than hearing or reading news.

2.2.7. That the professional media goes in the direction of integration with the social media, and there is no traditional media but with platforms on the social media, especially large institutions. Those who did not integrate with this technology will end.

2.2.8. That the education system in the media colleges is suffering from the problem of providing traditional media only, and graduates from the media colleges are not ready to access the labor market. Media institutions also do not provide adequate training for these graduates.

2.2.9. That the power and influence of social media companies expanded significantly and became larger than the authority of States, which increased the restrictions on the freedom of the Internet.

2.2.10. The government used an excuse (false and misleading news, rumors, hate speech and character assassination) to restrict freedom of expression on the internet, regardless of the real size of these problems compared to the "good" use of social networking platforms.

### **2.3. The third topic: discusses the professional challenge and economic safety net for journalists**

The third brainstorming session organized by CDFJ



on "professional challenges and living and career security for journalists and journalists".

"The problem of job and livelihood security for journalists is not a new or urgent problem, especially with the spread of the electronic media and social networks, as well as the lack of investment in the media in Jordan due to the absence of laws that encourage this type," the report which reflects the CFDJ opinion. This is in addition to the weak investment in the media domain in Jordan due to the absence of laws that encourages such investment, which increases the concern of journalists.

The discussion session reached a number of key points, including:

2.3.1. That the causes of professional problems in the Jordanian media that affect the security of living journalists are due to the government's control over the media and attempts to contain it and its independence, in addition to the multiplicity of references in the editorial policies.

2.3.2. The lack of media coverage of major developments in the media and modern media has contributed to the growing threat to the livelihood of journalists who continue to practice their traditional work in the newsrooms.

2.3.3. That the economic dimension is very important, it affects the media as a profession and the media people themselves, especially as the laws governing the media work in Jordan does not encourage domestic or foreign investment.

2.3.4. The skills of journalists and their training in the media and its modern applications should be developed to reach the concept of "mass journalist" in order to protect his job security in the media whose tools are developing and expanding rapidly.

2.3.5. That the security of life is linked to the State democracy and to human rights, to equal distribution of resources to various sectors, including the media, and to ensure that those resources do not belong to a limited category to be distributed on without fair standards.

### 3. Chapter 3: Violations affecting media workers

The third chapter of the report discussed the violations of journalists in Jordan in 2018. It was divided into two sections. The first was a presentation of a random sample of journalists about their attitudes and impressions of the reality of media freedoms in Jordan during 2018. The second section included a presentation of violations documented by the "AIN" team as follows:

### 3.1. The first topic: Media vision of the reality of media freedoms in Jordan 2018: Opinion poll

The report team used an information form as a survey tool to identify journalists' attitudes to the reality of media freedom. The questionnaire included specific and clear questions to reach the indicators and impressions of the journalists interviewed.

The team who prepared the report used a questionnaire as a tool to know the journalists' positions towards the reality of media freedoms in Jordan for the year 2018, divided into three axes: practices, policies and legislation.

The report's team compared the results of this survey despite the different sample size with similar hypotheses and inquiries about the results of previous surveys conducted by CDFJ about the opinion of journalists about the status of media freedoms in Jordan. The results were compared with those of the years 2006 to 2018, i.e. 14 consecutive years.

The results indicated that the majority of men and women journalists who were surveyed for their views on the reality of media freedoms in Jordan in 2018 expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of media freedoms in Jordan.

The report presented the results of the survey, the most prominent of which are:

- 24 journalists out of 100 journalists said that they were exposed to problems and violations because of their media work during the past year.
- The number of violations and problems claimed by the surveyed journalists reached 63 violations. They were distributed in 16 forms and types of violations, including 15 serious violations.
- Thirty-four men and women journalists reported that the right to information was not guaranteed at all in Jordan, compared to 59 who said that the right to information was protected to varying degrees: 31 said that it was slightly respected, 26 said partially while two journalists said it was highly respected.
- 82% of the respondents believe that the government is committed to answering the media questions, but to varying degrees. Half of the sample, 48 men and women journalists, believe that the Government is committed to answering media questions by a "medium level", 30% "low level", 4 "high level" while 14 interviewees believe that the government is not committed to answering media questions at all, while 4 answered by saying "I do not know."
- 92 journalists from both sexes out of 100 said they are self-censuring themselves in the course of their journalistic work.

The report showed that the results of the poll showed a difference in the attitudes of journalists towards the media freedoms in Jordan in 2018. While 41 men and women journalists said that the media freedoms remained the same and did not change at all, 42 journalists of both sexes said that the media freedoms have decreased and only 14 journalists said Media freedoms have progressed.

The results showed another difference in the attitudes and impressions of journalists in describing the status of media freedoms in Jordan in 2018. The number of journalists who said that the media freedoms are (good) and (medium) were 40 journalists from both sexes, compared to 58 who described them as acceptable and (low), while no one described them as (excellent). Sixty-one journalists from both sexes said they believe that the government is not at all serious about building free media, while 39 believe it is serious about building free media to different degrees.

In terms of legislations governing the media, 76 journalists from both sexes said that media legislations in Jordan constitute a restriction on freedom of information, while 15 said it did not affect freedom of the media, while 5 journalists believe it contributed to the advancement of media freedom. In addition to that, 86 journalists from both sexes said that the legislations governing the Jordanian media contribute to violations against media workers, while 8 said that the legislations governing Jordanian media do not contribute to violations at all.

The bill amending the law on cybercrime was opposed by 77 journalists from both sexes, while 9 supported the bill. A total of 93 journalists from both sexes said they believed the government would use or benefit from the punishments contained in the cybercrime law on hate speech to restrict freedom of expression and information, including 75 respondents who believe to a large extent in that.

### **3.2. The second topic: violations of media rights in Jordan 2018**

The second topic of the third chapter presented violations that enable the team for Monitoring and Documenting Violations of Media Freedoms in "AIN" affiliated to CDFJ to monitor and document violations in 2018.

He pointed out that the "AIN" team has been able to monitor and document 11 cases of attacks on the freedom of media and media rights, including 8 individual cases and 3 collective cases targeting all journalists, the most important one was about pressuring the journalists and preventing them from covering popular protests at the fourth roundabout.

The number of violations was 68 violations against 18 journalists from both sexes, in addition to one media organization, but the remarkable violations of the year 2018 is the occurrence of three cases, which were caused by media activity and publication on social media, especially Facebook.

Number of violations	Number of journalists victims of violations	Number of media institutions victims of violations	Number of Ind. Collect.	Social media
68	18	1	8	3
			11	3

The report said that despite the decline in the number of violations, which the (AIN) team was able to monitor and document amounted to 68 violations compared to 173 violations in 2017, but the causes of these violations are not very different from previous years, while CDFJ interpreted the apparent decline in the number of violations by the following:

- The most serious violations recorded in 2017 occurred in two collective cases: the denial of coverage of the release of “Ahmed Daqamsa” and violations against journalists while covering the election day of the municipal elections and decentralization held on 15 August 2017.

One cannot deny that CDFJ in 2018, and because of the circumstances that he was exposed to, did not conduct daily monitoring, and therefore there might be violations that it wasn't able to monitor and document, but this does not negate the indicators that the Center mentions in this report.

One cannot also deny that the government and the law enforcement agencies learn from their mistakes and abuses, and therefore the mass violations specifically, when dealing with protests, have clearly declined.

"Despite the quantitative decline in the number of violations, it cannot be said that the environment for media freedom in 2018 has improved, because the violations that resulted from covering the popular protests in the fourth roundabout area as well as the coverage of side sit-ins that may occur in other areas of the total number of violations in the Kingdom's governorates was 36 violations, representing 53% of the total violations. It is an indication that journalists continued to be prevented from covering sit-ins and protests, as in the years from 2011 to 2014, when the violations against journalists, as a result of their coverage of the popular movement at the time, was high compared with

other causes of violations. It started to decline in 2015 until the beginning of the return of the protests movement to the fourth roundabout against the government's policies and approach in dealing with economic and social issues in the country”.

It noted that journalists had been subjected to attacks and violations that had been proven as a result of their coverage of murder and theft related crimes. The number of violations of such cases amounted to 20 violations, constituting 29.4% of all violations.

It pointed out that the violations took two forms: the first is the practices adopted by the security services through interference in the media work, and the second is related to the overlap that is expanding day by day between the work of information and publishing on the social media in the integration provided by the applications of smart media in the field of information technology.

The huge violations documented in the report accounted for 29.5 % of the total violations, indicating that journalists continued to be subjected to serious abuses, resulting in serious violations of the law, with the impunity of perpetrators and the lack of redress and compensation for victims.

In comparison to previous years, the number of cases in 2018 coincided with the number of cases monitored and / or received by the CDFJ during the previous year 2017 of 21 cases, despite the obstacles faced by the CDFJ during 2018, and remained higher than the rates of cases received by the Center during the years from 2010 to 2014.

The report adds that "CDFJ has testimonies of journalists who have been subjected to violations after publishing examples of their work on social media, or some evidence of overlap and possibly integration between the work of the journalist or the media worker in his organization and his activity on social networks”.

The violation of the prohibition of coverage was ranked first, with 13 times repetition and 19% of the total violations. It's a violation that has been ranked in the first position in the Center's reports over the past years. However, it is remarkable that the violation of cruel and degrading treatment comes second. It was repeated 9 times and amounted to 13.2% of the total documented violations. It is also noteworthy that the violation of physical assault came in the third place repeated 8 times with a percentage of 11.8% of the total violations. In addition to that, the detention of freedom was repeated in 2018 remarkably 7 times and came in fourth place with 10.3% of total violations, equal to the violation of harassment, which also was repeated 7 times in the same rank and proportion.

The violation of the assault on the tools of work was ranked fifth, repeated 5 times with a percentage of 7.3%, while the perpetrators of arbitrary arrests and threats of abuse were ranked sixth, each repeated 3 times with a percentage of 4.4%. In the seventh place, two violations about information and injuries were repeated, each of which was repeated twice with a percentage of 2% of the total violations, while one was recorded and was ranked eighth with a percentage of 1.5% for each of the violations of the security investigation, arbitrary detention, verbal abuse, work tools, deletion of camera contents, prohibition of radio and satellite broadcasting, damage to assets and properties, and prevention of publication and distribution.

Number	Nature of violation	%	Repetition
1	Prevention from coverage	%19	13
2	Cruel and degrading treatment	%13.2	9
3	Physical abuse	%11.8	8
4	Stiffling freedoms	%10.3	7
5	Harassment	%10.3	7
6	Attacks on work tools	%7.3	5
7	Arbitrary Detention	%4.4	3
8	The threat of abuse	%4.4	3
9	Withholding information	%3	2
10	Injuries	%3	2
11	Security investigation	%1.5	1
12	Arbitrary detention	%1.5	1
13	Verbal abuse	%1.5	1
14	Pre-censorship	%1.5	1
15	Reservation of work tools	%1.5	1
16	Deleting the contents of the camera	%1.5	1

17	Prevention of radio and satellite broadcasting	%1.5	1
18	Damage to property and property losses	%1.5	1
19	Prevention of publication and distribution	%1.5	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>%100</b>	<b>68</b>

"The total number of serious violations documented by the report, according to the allegations of journalists, amounted to 20 violations out of 68 violations with a percentage of 29.5% of all violations, a figure less than one violation of the serious violations committed during 2017 which amounted to 21 violations. The report presented typical instances of serious violations. "

### Gross violations

Number	Type of violation	Repetition	%
<b>1</b>	Cruel and degrading treatment	9	%13.2
<b>2</b>	Physical assault	8	%11.8
<b>3</b>	Injuries	2	%3
<b>4</b>	Arbitrary detention	1	%1.5
	Total of injuries	<b>20</b>	<b>%29.5</b>
	Total number of violations	<b>68</b>	<b>%100</b>

The report pointed out that the violations of the right to freedom of opinion, expression and information came in the first place with a frequency of 27 times and 39.7% of the total violations. Violations covered by this right are violations for: prevention of coverage, harassment, information withholding and security investigation. The deletion of the contents of the camera, the prohibition of radio and satellite broadcasting, and the prevention of publication and distribution.

"The most striking indicator of human rights is the violation of the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and personal safety in the second place with 23 recurrences with a percentage of 33.8% of the total violations. Including the exposure of journalists to cruel and degrading treatment, physical assault, injury and arbitrary detention. "

The report found that the violations of the right to freedom and personal security were ranked third with a frequency of 11 times and 16.2% of the total violations. The violations included in this part freedom of detention, arbitrary arrest and detention.

In the fourth and last place, the violation of the right to property was repeated 7 times with a percentage of 10.3% of the total violations. Violations covered by this right include assaulting and seizure of work tools, damage to property and property losses.

N	Right violated	%	Repetition
1	Right to freedom of opinion, expression and information	%39.7	27
2	The right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and personal safety	%33.8	23
3	Right to freedom and personal security	%16.2	11
4	Right to own property	%10.3	7
		<b>%100</b>	<b>68</b>

The report said that the attacks of the security services on the freedom of the media accounted for 63.6% of the total documented violations during the year 2018, and ranked first compared to violations on institutions and government departments and the House of Representatives, which came second with a percentage of 18.2% of the total cases. The (AIN) group believes that the majority of security services attacks on journalists occurred due to coverage of popular protests in the fourth roundabout, or when they covered other sit-ins.

Rank	Violating authority	Number of cases	%	Number of violations	%
1	Security services	7	63.6%	56	85%
2	Government institutions and services	2	18.2%	6	9%



3	House of representatives	2	18.2%	4	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100%</b>

The report divided the cases of violation into individual cases; cases where a journalist or a number of journalists were found to have been involved in violations of freedom of information. They were signed at one time and place but did not include all journalists or a wide range of journalists or media organizations, they were not extensive. Collective cases, which are not required to have occurred at a particular place or time, may fall on a particular day such as the case of a decision to prevent publication on the investigation trail in the case of the accident of the Victoria School students and others at the Dead Sea, or may occur at different periods throughout the year, but the causes are one, and their occurrence is one such as the situation of restrictions on journalists and preventing them from covering the popular protests in the fourth roundabout.

### **The following is a list of the cases documented in the report:**

#### **Individual cases**

- The arrest of the correspondent of Roya TV "Ziad Nusairat" for two days against the backdrop of a case against him after filming a sit-in in front of the police station Bani Kenana to protest against the phenomenon of "royalties" in Irbid.
- Stop the broadcast of the channel "Noor Al Urdun" against the backdrop of hosting the liberated soldier, "Ahmed Aldakmsa."
- Assault on the photographer of Al-Ghad newspaper "Muhammad al-Mughaydah" and detaining his freedom while covering a raid for wanted persons.
- The House of Representatives prevents journalist photographer "Fares Khalifa" from covering.
- Preventing the photographer "Osama Al-Aqarabah" from filming the scene of an armed robbery attempt on one of the money exchange shops and the seizure of his freedom.
- Teachers attack the correspondent of Roya TV in Irbid "Derar Ghannam"
- The arrest of the journalist Mohammed al-Wakil and the journalist Ghadir al-Rabihat following a complaint about publishing an image on the website of the Wakil website considered offensive to Jesus Christ.

### Collective cases

- The Jordanian Council of Representatives issues a letter restricting the work of reporters and photographers inside the parliament.
- Preventing publication of the investigation about the case of the sinking of the Victoria School students and others in the Dead Sea.
- Restricting journalists and preventing them from covering the Fourth Circle protests.

The report concluded with an annex that includes a mechanism to monitor and document violations by CDFJ and its program team for Monitoring and Documenting Violations of Media Freedoms in Jordan "AIN".

*For more information, see the Media Freedoms Status Report, 2018*