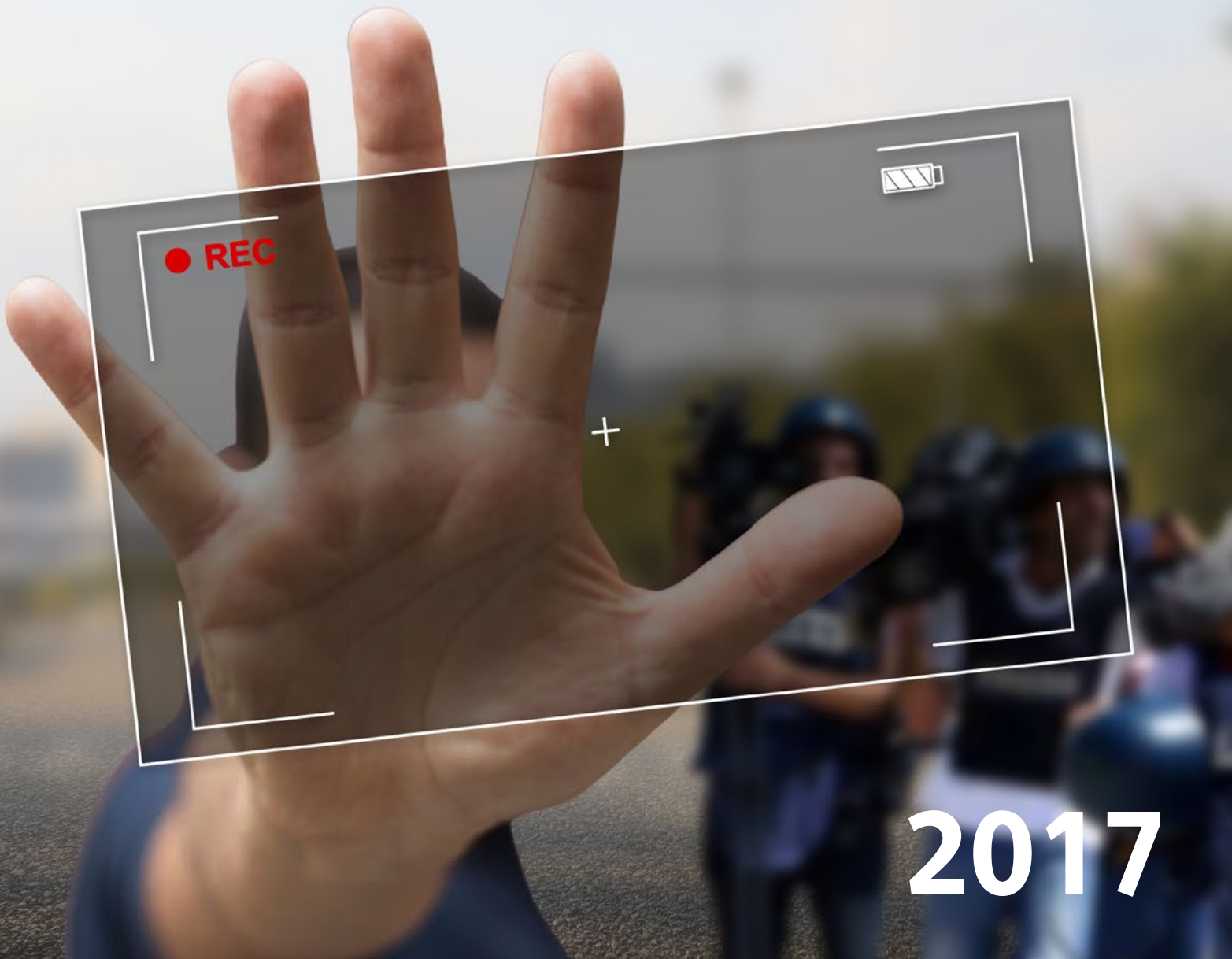




## Media Freedom Status in Jordan 2017



2017



# **Media Freedom Status in Jordan 2017**

**Executive Summary of the Report**



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## Preface

# Media Freedom and a Ray of Hope

### •Nidal Mansur

In 2017, media freedom in Jordan witnessed a slight improvement in indicators. This was basically due to the declining of the overall average of serious violations out of total violations.

What created a negative impression most and irritated journalists most was the proposal submitted by the Legislation and Opinion Bureau to amend the Electronic Crimes Law. Specifically, the new law adds a definition of the hate speech that is not in line with the international discussions and directives. The law is a pressure tool on the freedom of expression and imposes penalties of imprisonment and exaggerated financial fines.

The journalists' negative position from the laws was clear in the results of the 2017 opinion survey implemented by the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ), which contradicted and opposed a ray of positive opinions.

62% of journalists believe that the legislations represent a constriction of media freedoms, and 87% of those who examined the amendment to the Electronic Crimes Law believe that penalties to using the hate speech, according to the law, will be employed to constrict the freedom of expression.

We do not expect an upheaval in the march for media freedoms in Jordan overnight. Marching towards the slogan "The Sky is the Limit for the Media freedom," launched by King Abdullah II at the start of his reign requires a change in the "state mentality" structure to accept and coexist with the idea that the media is a "monitor" over the authorities and their servant. It is the society's eye and ear.

For this radical change in the relationship between the media and the state systems to occur, accumulating



achievements and pushing media freedoms steps ahead is possible. Jordan

has opportunities for deliverance from stalemate, oscillation, and acceptance of defining it as a "partially free" state, or among the "democratic margin" states and moving into the category of democratic states without any cost that affects the political system and national security.

In the introduction to the Media Freedoms in Jordan Report 2016, I stated, and continue to do so, that "I am convinced that in spite of the setbacks sometimes and blockade, harassment, and ignoring us often, Jordan still has an historic opportunity to chart a different route from the region that suffers from fires, authoritarianism, oppression, and human rights violations. I am convinced that our country is different: The regime enjoys a stable and fixed legitimacy with no conflict with its people, no blood separates it from its people, and the King's discussion papers, particularly his conclusive and clear talk about the rule of law, citizenship, and the civil state represent the key to the solution for retrieving the roadmap toward deep-rooting human rights and preserving and respecting freedom of expression and the media."

The positive progress in reducing serious violations could have taken a better track had the decisions and procedures to prevent even non-serious violations from emerging and recurrence noticeably been taken.

Preventing journalists from coverage was the main violation that increased by 2017. In the monitoring and documentation register, prevention from coverage was repeated 60 times. Most cases were



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group prevention, which is what instigated us to choose “STOP” as a title for the report and cover design. It illustrates preventing journalists from practicing their work freely and smoothly.

A reading of the coverage prevention cases shows that law-enforcement parties could have avoided them. For example, preventing media outlets from covering the release of soldier Ahmad Al-Daqamseh in the village of Ibder, his birthplace, caused a large number of complaints and an increase in the rate of prevention from coverage violations.

The issue was repeated clearly in the municipal and decentralization elections, when some polling station managers prevented journalists and media professionals from practicing their work freely under various pretexts. When clear instructions came from the Independent Election Commission chief not to obstruct the work of journalists, affirming their right to monitor and film, except for voting insulation locations, violations stopped, but numerous complaints had already been registered.

This violation could have been avoided by preparing a simplified guide of the journalists’ rights and making it available to voting centers’ managers and security men providing protection for the election process.

Successive governments know that improving the state of media freedoms are not difficult-to-achieve and verify wishes. Had the political will been there, we would not have stumbled and lost. The compass is clear, and all they had to do was review legislations and laws to rid them of the restrictions imposed on the media, and continue with policies that are being imposed against the media, continuing with policies that spread a climate conducive to the freedom of the press, and to confront and hold accountable those who practice restrictions and violate media freedoms.

The matter is not difficult or impossible. Neither does it require numerous ornamental explanations. If you want to develop the legislations, it is not understandable why you move in the opposite direction, moving towards amending the Electronic Crimes Law by adding more crimes and maximizing penalties.

If you strive to protect the profession of journalism, it does not make sense to impose more taxes on paper and production and printing inputs, increasing the burdens on newspapers threatened with closure and disappearance.

If you want to protect journalists from assaults and violations, the ABC of achieving this is for the perpetrators to be subject to accountability and prosecution so that they do not have impunity.

The roadmap for improving media freedom’s indicators in Jordan is not an incomprehensible mystery. In order to progress and feed the ray of hope, we are required to create a pattern that creates a harmony between our slogans and our practices, and to move forward, voluntarily and willfully, towards implementing our international obligations, because they contribute to Jordan’s progress and prosperity.

In 2018, and as this report sees the light, CDFJ will have completed 20 years of its march and work of protecting journalists. This anniversary comes at a time when we are facing unprecedented challenges, when we are facing pressures and harassments that threaten the continuity of our work, after false accusations and an unjust campaign to discredit CDFJ.

We continue to defend the media freedom. This is an irreplaceable option. We believe in the human rights values and work for them. We are loyal to this homeland in every time and place. We protect it with our lives, so that it remains head-high.

- **Executive President**

**Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)**

## INTRODUCTION

For the past 17 years, CDFJ has continued to publish its report on “The State of the Media Freedoms.” It continues to publish this report, which has become a reliable reference for international and national organizations and researchers in Jordan and outside.

Every year, CDFJ's management reviews developments in the media arena in Jordan and strives actively to deal with them, attempting to respond to them or explain them whether through its annual opinion survey or through monitoring and documenting complaints and alleged violations reported by journalists.

In the 2017 report, our attention was heavily drawn by the government's approach and contemplation regarding yet another amendment of the Electronic Crimes Law, adding an additional item connected to the hate speech in terms of definition and criminalization. We believed that this represents a threat to the freedom of expression.

In the survey, we addressed again the importance of the right to access information and how journalists perceive the government's dealing and position with this right, and whether it responds effectively to requests for accessing information.

We asked, as part of the opinion survey, about the position of CDFJ among journalists on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its establishment, and about the challenges it faces.

The Media Freedom Status report is an expression of the reality of the media scene and the conditions under which journalists live. It is quite easy for anyone studying the report to feel what the responses in the survey reflect about the state of journalists and media freedoms, whether positively or negatively.

The report does not monitor the receding media freedom in Jordan only, but rather refers to the advances and positive sides. In the survey, one can feel the state of relative progress in some indicators related to describing the media freedom status. This issue is also related to the receding rate of serious violations out of the total number of violations, noting clearly that there is an increase in the prohibition from coverage violation due to procedures and errors some of which may not be systematic or intentional, such as the case of the municipal councils and decentralization elections.

In 2017, prohibition on publishing circulars issued by the Media Commission were cancelled. The credit for this step goes to the general managers of the media commission. We hope that other parties stop issuing them as well.

The Media Commission also refused to raise lawsuits against journalists in the name of the government, ministers, or on behalf of state institutions.

The Media Freedom Status Report, composed of the Opinion Survey section and the Monitoring and Documentation of Complaints and Violations section, comes at a time when the suffering of media institutions continues, their financial crisis increases, and the professional status is being subjected to unprecedented challenges.

This report is an opportunity for decision-makers to study it and work systematically and institutionally to develop and improve the media work environment.



# Executive Summary



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Media Freedom Status in Jordan maintained its methodology which it developed and updated over the past years, and monitored over the past year (2017) new developments in the media work and what affected the reality of media freedoms in Jordan.

The report comprised two main parts: The journalists' opinion survey on the Media Freedom Status in Jordan, which included 10 sections, and the second part which was dedicated to presenting and analyzing the complaints and violations in four chapters. The methodology was presented at the end of the report. Following is a summary of the report's main results:

### 1. Part One: Journalists' Survey on the Media Freedom Status in Jordan 2017

59.5% of journalists opposed the amendments proposed by the Legislation and Opinion Bureau regarding electronic crimes. 30.8% expressed their strong opposition to these amendments.

87.7% of journalists who examined the proposed amendments to the Electronic Crimes Law believe that the penalties used to define the hate speech will be employed to harass the freedom of expression. 9.7% of participants believe that they will be used to impose restrictions on expression and the media.

Journalists who participated in the annual opinion survey carried out by CDFJ, in which 255 journalists participated said that this definition of hate speech will impose restrictions on the media freedom to a large extent (47.7%). 32.8% said it would to a medium extent, and 6.2% said it would to a mild extent. The percentage of those who believe that this definition imposes restrictions on the freedom of expression increased to 88.2% to high, medium, and low levels, and 91.8% believed that the definition of hate will impose restrictions on the freedom of expression in social media networks.

84.1% believed that the prison proposed sentences and fines in the proposed text of hate speech are extreme and exaggerated.

For the first time in many years, the media freedoms indicator in the opinion survey witnesses a slight improvement. 3.9% of respondents described them as excellent, while 1.5% saw them as excellent in 2016.

The opinions of journalists who believed that the media freedom status did not change remained at the same level, more or less, at 45.9%.

62% of the respondent journalists did not hesitate to say that media legislations represent a restriction on the media freedom. This indicator may reveal the fact that journalists were affected by the government proposal to amend the Electronic Crimes Law which caused, since 2016, an increase in cases of detaining journalists, which is rejected by journalists and considered by them a preemptive penalty.

The opinion survey, carried out by CDFJ through specialized opinion survey companies, was implemented between 6 and 23 December, 2017. The study population comprised of 1232 journalists (male and female) who are members in the Press Association as well as practicing journalists who are not members of the Association.

The percentage of journalists working in the private sector was 71.8%. The sample of those working in the public sector was 28.2%. Males represented 78.8% and females were 21.2% of the total number of participants. The percentage of the Press Association members who participated in the survey was 74.8%.

The opinion survey was subjected, as has been the case in previous years, to review of its questions. Some questions that proved not to offer good results or whose results remained constant in previous years were cancelled. The survey

also added new questions that took priority in listening to the opinion of the media environment to them, such as the proposed amendment to the Electronic Crimes Law and ensuring the right to access information and disclosure in ministries and public institutions in advance. It concentrated on monitoring the position from social media networks from the Electronic Crimes Law, and the extent of journalists' confidence in information they publish, Interest in the position from the hate speech and the extent to which it is spread was revisited, as well as the media networks that contribute most to spreading it.

The survey questions concluded with asking journalists about the role and importance of CDFJ in defending and protecting journalists and providing them with legal assistance, as well as monitoring and documenting violations against them, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its establishment and the challenges and pressures it is subjected to.

Survey results this year showed an increase in the percentage of journalists who impose self-censorship in their press work. The percentage registered higher levels than those recorded in 2014, reaching 94.1%, with an increase of slightly less than one degree compared to 2016.

The Royal Court came first in the subjects that journalists avoid at a percentage of (24.7%), followed by security systems at 19.7%, the armed forces in the third place at 16.4%, and discussing religious issues in the fourth place at 8.3%.

Survey results showed that social media networks enjoyed the confidence of people, according to journalists, at 92.2% in 2017 at high, medium, and low levels, and that more than two thirds of journalists who responded to the survey (71.8%) resort to publishing their press material and/or articles which they re-publish on professional media networks (newspapers,

magazines, radio, television, and websites) on social media networks for wider distribution.

Survey results revealed that the role of the government as part of the more effective parties in identifying and setting media policies in Jordan, has moved to second place at 18.8% in favor of the General Intelligence Department (GID) which assumed top position this year at 22.7%, followed by the Royal Court in the third position at 17.3%. The government maintained its first position in terms of the parties most influential in the media scene (18.3%), followed by the Royal Court in the second place at 16.6%, and the GID in the third place at 11.6%.

Survey results also revealed that 85.9% of respondents believed at high, medium, and low levels that media outlets contributed to exacerbating the violent speech and exclusion of the other in 2017.

Facebook came first as the network that spread the hate speech most in Jordan in 2017 at a rate of 41.8%, followed by Twitter in the second place at 24.5%, electronic media in the third place at 10.6%, YouTube in the fourth place at 9.6%, and SnapChat in the fifth place at 7.1%. Traditional media outlets remained detached from being accused of spreading the hate speech, with the printed press receiving 1.5%, radio at 1.3%, and television receiving 1.9%.

The survey was spread over 1- main sections which we present hereunder together with their main results in the executive summary as follows:

### **1.1 Section One: State of Media Legislation and Freedoms**

The results of the opinion survey of Jordanian journalists on the Media Freedom Status in Jordan in 2017 indicated that there is a slight improvement in some data. The overall



percentage, however, remained constant between improvement and retreat with slight percentages.

The percentage of those who describe the media freedom status as excellent improved this year at a rate of 3.9%, and the percentage of those who believe that media legislations contributed to improving the media freedom increased by one point this year, reaching 12.5% against 11.3% in 2016. The percentage of those who believe that media legislation in Jordan represent a constraint on the media freedom increased at 62.0%, and the percentage of those who believe in the negative effect of the media legislation in media policies retreated by less than two points, reaching 60%.

74.9% of respondents to the opinion survey believed that Jordanian media legislations are compatible with international standards increased by 4 points this year at 74.9% compared with that in 2016 when the percentage was 78.5%. The percentage of those who believe that media legislations contribute to violations against journalists decreased by about 9 points, reaching 76.8% at high, medium, and low levels.

At a time when 76.5% of the journalists responded to the government's amendment to the Electronics Crimes Law, half of them (59.5%) oppose these amendments. 87.7% of them believe that the government will benefit from these penalties to restrict the freedom of opinion and expression. 86.7% of them affirmed that this amendment will impose restrictions of the media freedom.

While 62.0% of these amendments are compatible with international standards at high, medium, and low levels, 88.2% believe that the definition quoted by the government of the hate speech in the Electronics Crime Law will impose restrictions on the freedom of expression at high, medium, and low levels, against 91.8% who believe that this amendment will impose restrictions on the freedom of expression in social media networks.

Survey data also revealed that 84.1% of journalists who examined the amendments believe that the proposed imprisonment and fine penalties are large and exaggerated, while 73.3% oppose the imprisonment penalty, calling for penalties to be restricted to financial fines since these are civil and not criminal cases. 18.4% of journalists prefer to keep the prison and fines penalties.

## **1.2 Section Two: The Access to Information Right**

More than two thirds of journalists (71.8%) believe that the ATI right is preserved for journalists. Moreover, 78.4% of respondents believed that the government is committed to responding to their enquiries. 74.5% believe that the government is committed to prior disclosure of information.

It is noteworthy that journalists' confidence in the credibility of information provided by the government to them is clearly high, which helps reinforce confidence among journalists in this respect. 88.2% of respondents believed that the information provided by the government to journalists is characterized by credibility. 87.1% of respondents believe that electronic sites of ministries and public institutions provide information to journalists and society.

It is noteworthy that CDFJ launched two years ago project "Eraf" to enhance transparency and the right to know in cooperation with the Rule of Law program and the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to improve the implementation by government bodies (Ministries and public Institutions) of the Access to Information Right. This project contributed to improving disclosure indicators and providing information to the public and journalists.



### 1.3 Section Three: Media Policies

61.6% of journalists believe to a large, medium, and low levels in the government's seriousness to build a free media in 2017. Moreover, the government role retreated in the more effective areas of identifying and setting media policies in Jordan, to assume the second place (18.8%) in favor of the GID which advanced this year to the top position at 22.7%. The Royal Court came third at 17.3%.

The government maintained its top position in terms of the most influential parties in the media scene (18.3%). The Royal Court came second (16.6%) and GID came third at 11.6%.

### 1.4 Section Four: Violations

The results of the survey and monitoring violations revealed an increase in the number of journalists who were subjected to harassment and violations in 2017, reaching 60 respondents who stated that they were subjected to numerous violations at a rate of 23.5%. The number of recurrent violations reached 113 this year against 76 recurring violation in 2016.

Blocking information continued to be the number one violation this year at 9.4% of total violations, recurring 29 times, followed by prevention from publishing of 22 recurring cases at 7.1%. The violation of Threat came third at 15 recurring violations (4.9%). Security summons came fourth with 9 recurring violations at the rate of 2.9%. Slander and defamation involving profanities came fifth at 2.6% including 8 recurring cases.

In the sixth position was the prohibition from coverage violation at the rate of 2.6% including 8 recurring violations. The incitement violation was repeated 5 times at a rate of 1.6%, followed by security incitement (1.3%) at 4 recurring cases, restriction of freedom at 0.6% in 2 recurring cases, and blocking a website operated by or employing a journalist with two cases at the rate of 0.6%.

Violations involving breaking or confiscating a journalist's equipment, nepotism or contact (Wasta), interrogation at the public prosecutor's office, were repeated at the joint rate of (0.3%). It is important to point out that journalists' responses in the opinion survey to the question of violations allegations is not a reliable indicator, but field monitoring and documentation of violation allegations in Part II adopts a stable methodology.

Cases of detaining journalists receded this year to include 2 cases only, while 2016 witnessed the detention of 3 journalists. It is necessary to affirm that the number of detentions stated here do not include all detention cases to which journalists were subjected in 2017, but are related only to responses and cases in the sample used in this survey.

While credit is given to the State Security Court for not detaining any journalist, the public prosecutor is the one who ordered the detention of the two journalists because one of them published an article about a housing company as a chief editor, and the other with the charge of slandering Zaki Bani Irshayd, the Muslim Brotherhood's Controller General.

Seventeen journalists were tried in courts of law in 2017, which witnessed issuing 10 non-conclusive judgments subject to appeal and cassation, including one requiring 4 journalists to pay compensation to the complainant, one judgment of non-responsibility, two to pay financial compensation to the government, two of imprisonment with non-conclusive decisions against 2 journalists, and one that included both imprisonment and fine against one journalist.

The court issued this year 5 conclusive judicial judgments that are not subject to appeal or contestation, including one judgment of innocence, two with a fine payable to the government, and one with a fine and a prison sentence, as well as one to pay a financial compensation to the complainant.

Among the journalists who were referred to the judiciary this year, 6 were represented by the Legal Aid Unit at CDFJ. With a clear decrease in the share of "Milad" in defending journalists due to the measures taken against CDFJ, which required CDFJ to stop providing this legal service until the crisis it is facing comes to an end.

The opinion survey results this year revealed that most journalists (83.8%) believe to large, medium, and low levels that resorting increasingly to detention and imprisonment will increase self-censorship among journalists. Furthermore, 93.0% of journalists believe to large, medium, and small degrees that the increased resorting to detention and imprisonment will increase self-censorship among journalists by media institutions' management.

93.3% believe to a large, medium, and small degree that resorting increasingly to detention and imprisonment will result in Jordan's media freedoms' indicator in international reports to retreat. 91.7% believed that resorting increasingly to detention and imprisonment will result in controlling what is written by people on social media networks to large, medium, and small degrees. 93.7% of journalists also think to large, medium, and small degrees that resorting increasingly to detention and imprisonment will result in receding interest in media investment, especially in electronic media.

The results of the opinion survey reveal this year a retreat of about 3 points in the percentage of journalists who believe in government intervention in media outlets, reaching 77.3% against 80.5% in 2016.

Among those who call for government intervention in media outlets, 83.2% believe that this intervention led to a decrease in the ceiling of media freedom, against 14.7% who believe that this intervention had no effect on the media freedom in 2017.

## 1.5 Section Five: Methods of Containing Journalists

2017 saw a decrease in cases of containing journalists by about 5 points and a percentage of 16.5%, representing 42 journalists responding, against 21.8% in 2016. 82.7% of the respondents denied that they were subjected to any containment attempts.

49.4% representing 126 respondents stated that they heard about journalists who were subjected to containment, luring, or concessions attempts while practicing journalism in 2017, against 94% representing 125 responding journalists who denied hearing of this.

## 1.6 Section Six: Professionalism and Self Organization

Data from 2017 recorded a slight decrease in journalists' support of trade unionism as one of the components of self-organization for journalists, against an improvement in journalists' conviction in the presence of an association for journalists as a framework for self-organization, at a rate of 64.7% who agree and strongly agree. 53.7% agree and strongly agree that developing organization mechanisms is connected to trade unionism.

According to journalists, 47.4% do not agree and strongly do not agree that the mandatory membership in the Press Association contradicts with the constitution and does not agree with international standards of free media, against 38.4% who agree. More than half the journalists do not agree to cancel mandatory membership in the Press Association this year, at a rate of 57.3%, against 34.9% who agree and agree strongly to cancel mandatory membership.

More than half the journalists who responded (52.9%) oppose the establishment of new press and other specialized associations, against

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42.8% who agree with this. Furthermore, 49.8% of journalists approve the establishment of specialized unions and associations for journalists, such as an association for electronic media, and another one for the visual media, against 45.1% who reject that.

According to the survey results, 80.4% of journalists agree and approve strongly that the more self-organization mechanisms developed in the media, the more independent it became. 82% of journalists agree and strongly agree that the more self-organization mechanisms developed the more professional it became.

Survey results indicated that 91% of respondents believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to credibility in transmitting information to large, medium, and small degrees. 90.7% believe to large, medium, and small degrees that Jordanian journalists are committed to pluralism in presenting opinions and are keen on the presence of the other's opinion. 92.5% believe that Jordanian journalists believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to protecting the secrecy of sources to large, medium, and small degrees. 87% believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to professional and moral code of behavior to large, medium, and small degrees, at a time when 92.6% affirmed that journalists are committed to respecting personal freedoms of people to large, medium, and small degrees.

According to the survey results, 85.5% of respondents believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to integrity and transparency in sources of financing for their work large, medium, and small degrees. 90.9% believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to avoiding the incitement of hatred large, medium, and small degrees, and that 92.6% believe in journalists' commitment to defending the media freedom and the values of independence to large, medium, and small degrees. 92.2% believe that

Jordanian journalists are committed to defending the human rights system large, medium, and small degrees, and 92.6% believe that Jordanian journalists are committed to avoiding slander and defamation of people to large, medium, and small degrees.

Journalists' information regarding the establishment of an independent complaints board that gives justice to society from the mistakes of the media witnessed a large retreat in the rate of supporters in 2017 compared to 2016. responses by journalists witnessed negative data towards the establishment of the independent complaints board and rates of advocacy, as well as a retreat in the convictions that were present last towards the positive sides of establishing such a board. This indicates that there is a large decrease by journalist in supporting such a project, although the rate of its approval is still very high.

82.4% of journalists approve the establishment of an independent complaints board that provides justice to society from the mistakes of the media to large, medium, and small degrees, against 90.3% last year.

The percentage of those who believe that the establishment of a complaints board will contribute to reducing violations of the profession's ethics retreated from 92.1% in 2016 to 79.9% in 2017. The percentage of those who believe that the establishment of a complaints board will contribute to reducing crimes of slander and defamation decreased this year by 20 points, reaching 81.1% this year, reaching 8.1% against 91.4% last year.

The total percentage of those who believe that the establish of a complaints board will contribute to developing professionalism to large, medium, and small degrees by 12 points in 2017, reaching 77.7% against 89.5% in 2016.

The total percentage of those who believe to large, medium, and small degrees that the establishment of a complaints board would give justice to those sustaining damage from media violations decreased by 11 points this year, reaching 80.4% against 91.4% in 2016.

The total percentage of those who believe, to large, medium, and small degrees that the establishment of a complaints board would contribute to the establishment of a rapid and fair equity mechanism retreated by 12 points to 79.3% this year against 91% last year.

Regarding the independent media station, the survey revealed that 78.8% of journalists do not see this station as independent from the government when it starts broadcasting.

67.5% do not believe that the independent media station will raise the ceiling of media freedoms when it starts broadcasting. 56.5% of respondents do not see that the independent media station will develop television media in Jordan when it starts broadcasting. 65.5% do not see that it will be capable of competing with Arab media satellite channels. 55.7% do not see that the independent media station will be able to compete and attract Jordanian audience, noting that journalists' position from the channel improved this year compared to previous years as the station was close to starting its broadcast and as a number of journalists started working for it.

### **1.7 Section Seven: Self-Censorship**

The percentage of media specialists who impose self-censorship on themselves in their media work increased in 2017, reaching the highest levels since recorded in 2014, reaching 94.1% this year, with an increase of less than one point compared to 2016.

52.9% of respondents believe that journalists avoid criticizing the government, and 80.4% believe that

Jordanian journalists avoid researching religious issues. 84.7% believe that journalists avoid discussing sex-related issues, and 85.9% believe that journalists avoid criticizing Arab leaders, against 55.7% who do not believe that journalists avoid criticizing Arab leaders. 72.9% believe that journalists avoid criticizing leaders of friendly countries.

Criticizing tribal Sheikhs and figures continues to be a red line which journalists avoided this year at 86.7%. Furthermore, 67.8% believed that journalists avoid discussing party leaderships. 87.1% believe that journalists avoid discussing economic issues, and 88.6% do not believe that journalists avoid discussing local problems. 92.2%, however, believe that journalists avoid criticizing the armed forces, and 91% believe that journalists avoid criticizing the judiciary. 82% believe that journalists avoid criticizing clergymen, and 83.1% believe that journalists do not avoid criticizing parliamentarians (members of the upper and lower houses). 94.5% believe that journalists avoid criticizing the Royal Court.

The Royal Court came in the top position among issues avoided by journalists at 24.7%, followed by security systems at 19.7%, the armed forces in the third position at 16.4%, and addressing religious issues in the fourth position at 8.3%.

### **1.8 Section Eight: Social Media Networks**

Social media networks continued to have people's confidence according to journalists at a rate of 92.2% in 2017, at high, medium, and low degrees. 97.7% of responding journalists believe that these networks contributed to people's participation and expressing their opinions in Jordan at high, medium, and low degrees, at a time when 96.4% believe that the networks contributed to providing new channels for knowledge for followers and people in Jordan at high, medium, and low degrees.

More than two thirds of responding journalists (71.8%) stated that they re-publish their press material and/or articles which they publish in professional media (newspapers, magazines, radio television, and websites) on social media networks with the intention of achieving wider circulation from the traditional outlets.

93.8% of journalists believe to a large, medium, and low degree, that social media networks played a role in reinforcing social accountability tools. 82.0% believe that they are committed to publishing credible information to a large, medium, and low degree, against 80.0% who believe that they are committed to respecting human rights to large, medium, and low degrees. 77.7% believe that they are committed not to spread the hate speech to large, medium, and low degrees. 77.3% believe in their commitment not to incite violence to large, medium, and low degrees.

According to respondent journalists' opinions, 75.2% believe that social media networks are committed not to violate the privacy of people to large, medium, and low degrees. 72.5% believe that they are committed not to spread rumors and fake and misleading information to large, medium, and low degrees. 72.5% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that they are committed to respecting differences and the other's opinion.

Results of journalists' opinion survey revealed that 91.7% of them believe that to detain and imprison social media users for what publish will lead to increased self-censorship to large, medium, and low degrees. 95.3% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that detaining social media networks users for what they publish will lead to users being careful about writing and publishing in a manner that is beyond the law.

96.5% stated that allowing the detention and imprisonment of social media users for what

they publish will lead to users being careful not to cross red lines to large, medium, and low degrees. 93.0% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention and imprisonment of social media users because of what they publish will lead to avoiding criticizing the state. 96.5% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention or imprisonment of social media users for what they publish will lead to avoiding the criticism of security systems. 96.9% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention or imprisonment of social media users for what they publish will lead to avoiding criticizing the army and armed forces.

90.1% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention and imprisonment of social media users for what they publish will lead to avoiding the criticism of the government. 91.8% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention and imprisonment social media users for what they publish will lead to avoiding slandering and defaming normal persons. 91.3% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that permitting the detention and imprisonment of social media users for what they publish will lead to avoiding the use of the hate speech.

### **1.9 Section Nine: Hate Speech in the Media**

Results of the Jordanian journalists' opinion survey in 2017 indicated that 82.4% of those surveyed believe to large, medium, and low degrees that media outlets contributed to reinforcing the hate speech. 84.4% of them believe to large, medium, and low degrees that media outlets contributed to reinforcing respect of the other's opinion and his freedom of expression.

85.9% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that media outlets contributed to enhancing the violence speech and excluding the other in 2017,



against 80.0% who stated that media outlets contributed to increasing the hate speech this year to large, medium, and low degrees.

Facebook came at the top of the list of media networks that spread the hate speech in 2017 at 41.8%, followed by Twitter in second place (24.5%), electronic media third at 10.6% and YouTube fourth at 9.6% and Snapchat fifth at 7.1%.

It is noticeable that traditional media outlets received very low percentages, which indicates that journalists do not believe that they are means of spreading the hate speech in Jordan. The printed press received the rate of 1.5%, radio received 1.3%, and television received 1.9%.

64.7% of journalists believe that media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to the position and awareness of journalists themselves, against 30.6% who believe that it is due to directives and incitement by the government of the media outlets. 64.7% of journalists refuse the idea that media outlets adoption of hate speech is due to the directives and incitement of the security systems.

While 96.1% of journalists affirmed that there are no reasons for media to adopt the hate speech, more than half journalists refuse that media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to religious trends and parties inciting the media (56.1%). 71.4% of journalists believe that journalists adopting the hate speech is due to the society's culture and values. Half journalists (51%) believe that the media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to the fact that journalists are connected to the government and the parties, and their lack of independence. 69.4% of journalists believe that media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to poor legal and human rights awareness by journalists.

69.4% of journalists believe that the media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to poor belief in democratic values. More than half journalists refused that adopting the hate speech by media outlets is due to international and regional pressures this year, at a rate of 57.6%. 62.4% of journalists believe that media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to the absence of codes of behavior that govern the work of journalists and media outlets, while 77.6% of journalists believe that media outlets adopting the hate speech is due to poor professionalism among journalists.

85.5% of journalists believe this year to large, medium, and low degrees that the consecutive political events and the conflicts in the region (Egypt, Iraq, Syria) as examples were the main reason for the spread of the hate speech. 86.8% believe to large, medium, and low degrees that social media networks do not bear the responsibility for the spread of the hate speech as platforms or tools for transmitting information and people's opinions and positions.

84.7% of journalists support the need to increase penalties against those who spread the hate speech in the media and social media networks, while more than half the journalists (65.5%) believe that among the reasons for the increase and clarity of the hate speech in the social media is the stumbling of the reform march in Jordan, against 58.4% who believe that it is because of the performance and practices of the House of Representatives. 62.4% believe that it is the result of the conflict between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood movement. 80.8% believe that the tough economic conditions through which people in Jordan are passing are among the reasons behind the increase and clarity in the hate speech in the social media networks.

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58.8% of journalists believe that the exacerbation of the Syrian refugees' crisis in Jordan is among the reasons behind the increase and clarity of the hate speech in the social media networks. 69.8% believe that the misconception by social media users that they cannot be prosecuted is among the reasons behind the increase and clarity of the hate speech in the social media networks. 68.2% believe that the fact that social media networks are not subject to censorship and government control were among the reasons behind the increase and clarity of the hate speech in social media networks.

The absence of heavy penalties against the perpetrators of the hate speech was among the reasons behind the increase and clarity of the hate speech in social media networks. This instigated 71.4% of journalists to think so. 46.3% believe that encouraging government and non-government parties to use hate speech to cause division among people was among the reasons behind the increase and clarity of the hate speech in social media networks in 2017.

### **1.10 Section Ten: Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ)**

93% of journalists believe to large, medium, and low degrees that the presence of CDFJ is a necessity to defend and protect the rights of journalists.

89.8% of journalists believe, to large, medium, and low degrees, in the need for CDFJ to provide legal aid to journalists.

The total number of journalists who believe to large, medium, and low degrees in the need for CDFJ to monitor and document violations against journalists was 94.9%. 89.4% believed to large, medium, and low degrees that the presence of CDFJ for training them and developing their capacities and professionalism is a necessity. 92.9% believe in the necessity of CDFJ to protect freedom of expression.

## 2. PART TWO: COMPLAINTS AND VIOLATIONS 2017

The "AIN" program team for monitoring and documenting violations against the media freedom in Jordan, affiliated with CDFJ, in Part Two, complaints by journalists and allegations of violations they were subjected to in 2017, amounting to 173 violations against 67 journalists, journalists, and one media institution. This was done through 21 assault cases against the media freedom and the rights of journalists, including 18 individual cases and 3 group cases that targeted all journalists. The most prominent was preventing the coverage of releasing Ahmad Al-Daqamseh on 12/3/2017, and preventing coverage 25 times in the municipal and decentralization elections in mid-August 2017.

The violations report revealed a retreat in average serious violations compared with overall violations numbers over the past years, noting that violations by law enforcement bodies retreated and their indicators improved, against an increase in assaults that emerged by civilian parties most of whom were anonymous citizens. It is noted that the government and security bodies did not move seriously to access those perpetrators and prosecute them in most cases.

It revealed that the phenomenon of assaults by anonymous citizens against journalists took place concurrently with journalists subjected to incitement campaigns and threats on the social media. Although some journalists submitted official complaints to the security forces, there was no information about apprehending the perpetrators or taking serious measure to protect journalists and ensure their safety.

The report showed that the percentage of serious violations reached 12% of the total

number of violations, at the rate of 21 violations manifest in physical assault, sustaining injuries, harsh and humiliating treatment, random detention, and an assassination attempt to which an Iraqi journalist working with the German news agency Deutsche Welle was subjected. The perpetrator was arrested and imprisoned.

It noted that the forms of violations and the parties responsible for them are changing every year. In 2017, the phenomenon of assaults by citizens against journalists was noteworthy, noting that the phenomenon which dominated the scene in 2016, namely, circulars prohibiting publishing issued by the Media Commission, did not surface in 2017 and may have disappeared. Similarly, and more importantly, was the absence of physical assaults against journalists by law enforcement bodies which appeared during the Arab Spring. No case of physical assault was monitored or recorded against journalists in 2017.

It noted that lawsuits raised by the Media Commission in the government's name or the names of ministers or state officials stopped according to monitoring percentages carried out by the "AIN" team during 2017.

The report showed that the government's interaction with the United Nations' contractual mechanism was a positive step and the right track it is credited for, through submitting an answer to a list of issues related to the fifth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee regarding the implementation of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Jordan submitted its report responding to a list of issues to the periodic report on 12 July, 2017.

It said that these indications are a positive step to be read within the context of monitoring and documenting violations and the reality of the media scene.



"AIN" team received 10 complaints' forms and information that included allegations by journalists of being subjected to various violations. It monitored 10 cases that included violations and problems through monitoring processes, each forming 47.6% of the report sources of information, in addition to one report.

Complaints received by the "AIN" team included 52 violations representing 30% of the total documented violations. The number of violations resulting from monitoring activities was 118 violations representing 68.2% of the total number of violations. 3 violations were recorded in one report representing 1.7% of the total number of violations.

### Number of Reports, complaints and the total of monitoring violations 2017



The number of types and form of violations documented by the report was 25 types and forms. What is new and most serious about the content of the violations list is an attempted murder assassination to which a number of the media cadre of a political satire program involved in the Iraqi affairs, broadcast on the German DW channel was subjected to. The perpetrator was tried and imprisoned.

Violations related to the right to opinion, expression, and the media came in the first place among the rights of journalists that were violated in 2017, at the rate of 102 violations at the rate of 58.3% of the total number of violations. The violations related to the right not to be subjected to torture or harsh, inhumane, or humiliating treatment and personal safety came second with 27 violations at the rate of 16.3% of the total number of violations. Violations related to the right to ownership came third with 19 violations at the rate of 10.6%.

Assaults against the right to freedom and personal safety came in fourth with 14 violations, manifest in deprivation of freedom, arbitrary arrest and detention, and confiscation of official documents at the rate of 10.3%. Assault on the right to non-discriminatory treatment came in fifth place, and violations against the right to residency and the right to life came in the sixth and last place.

There were numerous parties behind the violations to which journalists were subjected in 2017. Accusations were always directed at the law enforcement agencies which are in direct contact with journalists when covering events in tension areas. Government violations also existed, as well as violations by the judiciary, parliament, and businessmen.

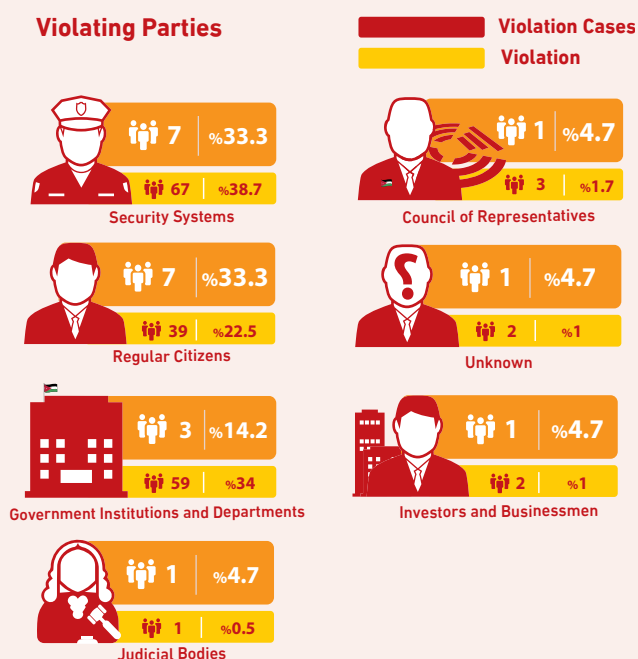
What was noteworthy in 2017 is an increase in cases behind which there were anonymous citizens, whether in physical assault, incitement, or threatening of journalists.

Although law enforcement parties were at the top of the list of parties that were the reason behind 7 cases of violations and included 67 violations at the rate of 38.7% of the total number of violations, to which 33 journalists were subjected, according to "AIN" team, the increase in the number of violations by the law enforcement bodies was preventing a group of 26 journalists from covering the release of Ahmad Al-Daqamseh on 12 March, 2017.

Cases of assaults by normal citizens came in the first place alongside the security systems in terms of the number of cases, through 7 cases as well, yet it came third in terms of the number of violations reaching 39 violations at the rate of 22.5% of the total number of violations. 8 journalists were subjected to them, most of whom were exposed to violations and assaults as a result of incitement in 5 different cases.

In the third place came violations the source of which the "AIN" team believes is government institutions and departments in three cases. However, they came third in terms of the number of violations amounting to 59 violations representing 34% of the total number of violations. This percentage is close to the security systems' violations which was 38.7% of the total number of violations, with a difference in the form and type of violations between the two.

The "AIN" team believes that 4 parties assumed the 4th position with one case and two violations for each. These are the council of representatives, anonymous citizens, investors and businessmen, and judicial institutions.



In its last chapter, Part Two presents all the cases which the "AIN" team monitored and documented after collecting sufficient evidence and verifying them.

Part Two was distributed over four main chapters that included wide comparisons in results and conclusions as follows:

## 2.1 Chapter One: The General Scene of the Media freedom in Jordan 2017

Chapter One of the Complaints and Violations presented Jordan's international commitments regarding the freedom of opinion, expression, and the media, and addressed in this respect Jordan's responses to the list of special issues related to the Fifth Periodic Report on implementing the International Convention for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Jordan submitted its report on responding to the list of issues for the Periodic Report in 12 July.

On 4 December, 2017, the Human Rights Committee announced its concluding remarks on Jordan's fifth periodic report. It recommended that Jordan takes the necessary measures to protect journalists to enable them to carry out their activities and tasks freely and without restrictions. It also recommended that assaults against journalists be investigated and perpetrators be referred to justice, as well as reviewing legislations in order to ensure that criminal penalties are not implemented against persons who express critical points of view, and that any restrictions on press and media activities are in line with the provisions of the ICCPR.

CDFJ participated with a number of civil society institutions in discussing Jordan's Fifth Report, and contributed by submitting its own report and the formation of an alliance that included 10 civil society institutions titled "Eye Jordan Coalition," which contributed to submitting its report. CDFJ also participated as a member in the Jordanian civil

anti-torture coalition JO-CAT and contributed to preparing this alliance's report.

In another part of the chapter, the report presented the positions of international and national positions from the state of press freedom in Jordan. In this context, it presented the position of the National Human Rights Center and what was mentioned about the freedom of expression and the media in Jordan as part of the international report of Human Rights Watch, 2017, and the Annual Report of Amnesty International for 2016/2017. Jordan was also placed on the International Freedom of the Press Indicator 2017 for Reporters without Borders organization, in addition to what was stated in a statement by Human Rights Watch regarding proposals by the Committee for Reforming the Judicial System in Jordan.

## **2.2 Chapter Two: Legal Framework of Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Expression in Jordan**

In its second chapter, the report addressed the restrictions imposed on the media freedom in media and other relevant laws, in addition to a summary of a focus group meeting organized by CDFJ at its headquarters for a select group of lawyers and journalists to discuss the legislative environment that incubates the media and its effects on the media freedom and the professional reality.

It made a number of recommendations to reform the laws media laws and those related to media work as follows:

### **2.2.1 Press and Publications Law**

- Repeal the text of article 49/A/1 of the law which stipulates the licensing of the electronic publication.
- Cancel paragraph C of article 49 which considers comments published by websites

as press material for which the chief editor is responsible together with the website owner jointly.

- Review loose and undisciplined texts in the law such as article 5 and 7, so that their interpretation is not used to prosecute journalists and hold them accountable.
- Activate the text of article 8 of the law and add a legal item that makes it mandatory for any official to respond to a journalist's request for information in a timely manner.

### **2.2.2 The Law Ensuring the Access to Information Right:**

CDFJ supported the amendments submitted by the government, namely:

- Reduce the period for responding to a request for information to 15 days instead of 30 days.
- Expand the membership of the Information Council to include the chairmen of the Bar Association and the Press Association.
- The right to request information has become a right for all residents in Jordan instead of Jordanians only.
- Submit reports about activating the Access to Information Right to the Prime Minister, the Council of Representatives, and the Council of Notables.

In addition to the government's amendments, CDFJ demanded the need for adopting basic amendments, most important of which are:

- Amend article 3 of the law to ensure wider independence of the Information Council by adding representatives of the Civil Society organizations and experts in this field.
- Amend article 13 of the law which expands in imposing exceptions to the access to information right to agree with article 19 of the ICCPR.
- Amend articles 7 and 13 which give precedence

to legislations in effect over the law of ATI right, such as the State Documents and Secrets Law.

### 2.2.3 Penal Code

- Restrict trying journalists for publication crimes mentioned in the Penal Code to the regular judiciary as opposed to the State Security Court.
- Cancel freedom-depriving penalties in publication crimes which are implemented by the Penal Code against journalists and therefore stop their detention.
- Cancel article 118 for violating the provisions of article 15/5 of the constitution as it allows prior censorship of the media, handing a minimum prison sentence of five years for journalists.
- Exempt journalists from the provisions of article 49/A which stipulate undermining and opposing the regime for crimes committed through media outlets whose penalty is a minimum of 3 years in hard labor.

### 2.2.4 State Security Court Law

- Exempt prosecuting journalists according to the provisions of article 149 of the Penal Code.

### 2.2.5 Anti-Terrorism Law

- Add a new paragraph to article 3 stipulating the exemption of crimes committed by media outlets from the implementation of the provisions of this law.

### 2.2.6 Electronic Crimes Law

- Amend article 11 by adding a text that excludes websites and users of social media.

## 2.3 Chapter Three: Violations of the Media freedom and the Rights of Journalists in 2017

Chapter Three included major aspects that discuss the violations documented by "AIN" program during 2017, the complaints and reports it received, and monitoring work it did, and gave a presentation on serious violations, the human rights of journalists that were violated and the violating parties, and compared the net violations with last year (2016) in addition to comparing them with the past 8 years.

It illustrated that violations with the highest level in quantity are those that affect directly the right to freedom of opinion, expression, and the media. The report documented 60 cases of recurrence by preventing from coverage, at the rate of 34.6% of the total number of violations, and withholding information, which was repeated 27 times at a rate of 15.6%.

It noted that the random deprivation of freedom violation came third, being repeated 9 times at a rate of 5.2%, followed directly by harassment at 8 times at a rate of 4.6%, and physical assault in the fifth place with a repetition of 5 times at a rate of 4% of the total number of violations.

Assault against work equipment, confiscating them, and sustaining injuries violations were repeated 6 times, while the threats of harm and incitement violations were repeated 5 times. Threats of damaging assets and loss of property were repeated 4 times, as were violations of harsh and humiliating treatment and verbal abuse.

Violations of arrest, random detention, and withholding official papers were repeated three times, while violations of preventing publishing and distribution, security investigation, deleting camera content, and assault against private property were repeated twice. Violations of

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threats of suspending the accreditation of a private channel, confiscation of work equipment, harming relatives, cancelling residency, attempted assassination of a journalist at the hands of an extremist who was imprisoned were committed once.

When comparing violations and their forms, and the extent to which they were repeated between 2016 and 2017, it becomes clear that the last year registered an increase in the number of violations with a difference of 38 violations. It stated that the prevention from publishing and distribution violation was the most prominent feature in 2016. What distinguishes 2017 is the relative increase in prevention from coverage and blocking information.

The report shows that the relative retreat in the number of violations of harsh and humiliating treatment in 2017 was due to cases of random arrest and detention that were less than in 2016. Journalists may be subjected to harsh and humiliating treatment in some cases when arrested and/or randomly detained along the background of their media work.

It highlighted the type and forms of fixed, stable, and unstable violations noting that a number of violations continued to be repeated noticeably during the years of the popular movement Jordan witnessed during the period from 2011 to 2014. They were less repeated in 2015, and reappeared between 2016 and 2017. It presented the fixed and stable violations as: Blocking websites; prevention from coverage; threats of inflicting harm; withholding information; harassment; physical assault; arbitrary deprivation of freedom; verbal assault; and prevention from publishing and distribution.

It revealed, when adding the violated rights of journalists over the eight years 2010 - 2017 that violations that affect the right to freedom of expression and the media came first at

808 violations at 65.6% of the total number of violations during the period.

It noted that violations affecting the right not to be subjected to torture or harsh or humiliating treatment and personal security came second at 235 violations at 19% of the total number of violations, and that violations related to the right to freedom and personal security came third with 105 violations at a rate of 8.5%.

In the fourth place was violations related to the right to ownership, through 56 violations at a rate of 4.5%, followed in fifth place by violations related to the right to non-discriminatory treatment at 13 violations, followed in the sixth place by violations related to the right to fair trial at 10 violations, and in seventh place violations related to the right to privacy through two violations. In the eighth and last place was violations related to the right to residency and the right to life through 2 violations, one for each.

The report compared the violating parties in terms of the number of cases and the number of violations that the "AIN" team believes were committed by these parties during the last three years 2015-2017. It showed that the governmental institutions bear the responsibility for the violations, coming first through 23 cases, at a rate of 29.5% of the total number of cases over the three years, followed in the second place by cases "AIN" team believes were caused by security systems through 21 cases whose percentage from the overall total is 27%.

Through 13 cases, violations resulting from the arbitrary use of judicial authorities came third, while in the fourth place came cases that the "AIN" team believes came from normal citizens. In the fifth place were cases by the Council of representatives through 6 cases. In the sixth place came anonymous persons through 2 cases, and finally in the seventh place were the following parties through one case for each: Universities and

academic institutions, investors and businessmen, trade unions, and DA'ISH organization.

When comparing the number of violations which the "AIN" team believes came from violating parties over the past 3 years, it was clear that the security systems and government departments and institutions, as well as normal citizens registered in 2017 the highest rates of violations quantity-wise in three years. They came in the top three positions.

The report noted the retreat of the number of violations for which the judicial authority was responsible over the past three years. From 17 violations in 2015, and 10 in 2016, there was one violation only in 2017. It stated that the number of violation the "AIN" team believes were caused by the Council of Representatives and anonymous persons is relatively stable.

#### **2.4 Chapter Four: Media Freedoms under Violation: Documented Cases**

In its fourth and last chapter, the report presented all the cases the "AIN" team monitored and documented in 2017. Readers can find testimonies and affidavits of victim among journalists who were subjected to violations and problems as individuals and/or groups.

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Reading the opinions of journalists and the results of the survey, and examining the reality of violations and the trajectory of the media state in Jordan encourages CDFJ to offer recommendations to all active parties in the media scene, as follows:

- 1.** Develop a new media strategic 5-year plan that includes measurable objectives and seeks to promote the media, support its freedom, and dedicate professionalism.
- 2.** Form a committee of experts that includes all parties to reform legislations governing the media in accordance with the constitution and international conventions and standards, and start immediate measures to amend legal articles that permit the imposition of freedom-depriving penalties.
- 3.** Return to revive the idea of establishing an independent complaints board that absolves society of the transgressions and mistakes of media outlets.
- 4.** Encourage self-organization frameworks by journalists in a manner that strengthens the independence of media outlets and reinforces trade unions pluralism, and motivates the birth of "frameworks" and specialized media associations.
- 5.** Establish a long-term perception for developing journalists' legal knowledge and skills to reduce the content that opposes human rights and promotes violence and the hate speech.
- 6.** Work at mass awareness programs for users of the social media, that contribute to broadcasting a content that is committed to truth and credibility, and reduces spreading rumors and false news, and nurtures the values of tolerance and accepting the other's opinion, limiting the spreading of ideas and practices that violate human rights, most prominently



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degrading human dignity, violating privacy, and spreading the hate speech.

**7.** Urge media institutions to develop a professional guide that identifies publishing standards and reduces prior-censorship space and the abuse of discretionary power inside media institutions by editors in chief and heads of departments, especially when they take decisions to prevent publishing without professional reasons or controls.

**8.** Study the self-censorship phenomenon which is on the increase inside the media society for years now, and develop practical perceptions to limit them in order to reinforce the right of society to knowledge.

**9.** Institutionalize the right to access information in public institutions and develop mechanisms that ensure prior disclosure, as well as develop ministry websites to become platforms for providing updated information.

**10.** Urge the Jordanian government to adopt policies that support public information along the BBC experience, to be financed by taxpayers with its independence preserved, to provide safe and professional job opportunities for journalists and to protect their rights.

**11.** Form independent investigation committees when journalists are subjected to any violations or allegations thereof, announcing the results to the public.

**12.** Pursue those who assault journalists and ensure that they are held accountable in accordance with the law to prevent the phenomenon of impunity.

**13.** Provide compensation and fairness to journalists who are victims of violations to guarantee that material and moral damage is compensated.

**14.** Provide protection to journalists who are exposed to threats because of their profession as journalists, and access and prosecute perpetrators.

**15.** Train law enforcement bodies on the mechanisms of dealing with journalists in tension and hot events areas in a manner that ensures their right to independent coverage without hindering the tasks and duties of security forces, and to adopt a guide or protocol that identifies the principles and mechanisms of work in detail.

**16.** Issue clear instructions by all state systems that affirm the right of journalists to cover the events independently and prevent any restrictions imposed on them.



The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ] was established in 1998 as a civil society organization working to defend media freedom in Jordan. CDFJ was established after a series of major setbacks to press freedom on a local level, starting with the issuing of the temporary press and publications law of 1997, which increased restrictions on the media and caused many newspapers to shut down.

CDFJ works to protect freedom and democracy in Jordan and the Arab world, while promoting respect for human rights, justice, equality, development, non-violence and open dialogue.

CDFJ always maintains its independence and does not take sides in the political process. However, when it comes to defending the freedom of journalists and the media, CDFJ stands against all policies and legislations that may impose restrictions on a free and thriving press.

CDFJ is active on a regional level in developing media freedom and strengthening the skills and professionalism of journalists in all Arab countries through customized programs and activities. Additionally, CDFJ works with media and civil society organizations to protect democracy and promote respect for human rights principles.

### **CDFJ's Vision:**

Developing and strengthening democracy and the reform process in the Arab World in a manner that supports freedom of expression and the media and that ensures commitment to international standards in press freedom.

### **CDFJ's Mission:**

The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists is a civil society organization. CDFJ defends media freedom and provides protection to Arab journalists by addressing violations to their rights, providing professional development and ensuring free access to information. Finally, CDFJ advocates for reform of legislation that restricts press freedom and works to foster a political, social and cultural environment that supports a free and independent media.

### **CDFJ's Primary Goals:**

- Supporting free and independent media and journalists
- Providing protection and security to journalists and addressing violations to their rights
- Strengthening the professionalism of the media and promoting the role of the media in defending democracy, liberty and reform.
- Developing a legislative, political, social and cultural environment supportive of the media.





برنامج رصد وتوثيق  
الانتهاكات الواقعة على الإعلام

## AIN

The Program for Monitoring and Documenting  
of violations against the media

### Vision:

To end violations committed against journalists and media institutions to strengthen the freedom and independence of the media

### Mission:

To monitor and document the problems, transgressions, and violations committed against journalists and media institutions during the exercise of their profession, and to peruse their perpetrators.

### Objectives:

- To build a qualified team of lawyers, journalists, and researchers to monitor and document the violations against journalists and media institutions according to internationally agreed upon principles and standards.
- To encourage journalists to disclose the problems, transgressions, and violations they encounter during the exercise of their work and to use relevant reporting mechanism.

- To develop and institutionalize the mechanisms for monitoring the problems and violations that journalists encounter
- To raise the journalists' awareness of their rights and their knowledge of the international standards for media freedom, as well as the definition of the violations they encounter.
- To urge the government to adopt the necessary measures to end the violations against the media and to hold their perpetrators accountable.
- To urge the Parliament to formulate legislation and laws that guarantee media freedom in order to end the violations against the media and hold their perpetrators accountable.
- To provide support and legal assistance to journalists who encounter problems and violations, inclusive of helping them receive fair compensation for violations they encountered and suffered from.
- To use UN mechanisms to limit violations committed against journalists.



The Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) was founded in 2001 to provide free litigation and legal consultation services to Jordanian journalists.

While the Jordanian constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, vague clauses in the Press and Publications law (1998) and broad interpretations of an antiterrorism law often lead to journalists facing legal repercussions for their work.

The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) established MELAD as a response to an increased number of media related legal cases brought against journalists. Given that Jordanian journalists can be detained for crimes ranging from defamation to denigrating religion or the state, the legal protection provided by MELAD is a necessity. In the absence of such protections journalists are likely to self-censor to avoid adverse legal consequences.

To date MELAD has represented 300 journalists in media related cases. In 2014, 66.7% of journalists facing trial in Jordan were represented by MELAD.

All of MELAD's legal services are 100% pro bono.

## Objectives:

1. Assigning lawyers to defend journalists who are detained or prosecuted for carrying out their duties.
2. Providing legal consultation to journalists without increasing restrictions or self-censorship.
3. Enhancing the legal awareness of the journalists and helping them exercise their constitutional rights of expression and defending the society's right to knowledge without violating the law.
4. Exhorting lawyers to give attention to journalism and media freedom issues, and developing their legal skills in this field.
5. Presenting draft laws to the parliament and government to improve the legal structure governing the media freedom in Jordan in harmony with the international standards.
6. Establishing streams of communication with the judicial authority to enhance press freedoms and create an understanding of the international standards for the media freedom.



## Mechanism of work:

1. Rebuilding the media legal aid unit by recruiting specialized qualified lawyers, organizing the unit's mechanisms of work and activating the voluntary efforts of lawyers.
2. Organizing advanced and specialized training for a number of lawyers who took part in previous training workshops with CDFJ, and involving new lawyers who are already engaged in defending newspapers, radio and TV stations to enrich their experience and encourage them to support the efforts of media legal aid unit.
3. Re-distributing and restructuring the work of media legal aid unit MELAD along three lines:
  - Defending journalists before juridical authorities and extending legal advice through building a network of lawyers which can provide legal protection for the journalists in a proper and professional manner.
  - Documenting the lawsuits filed against journalists and institutions in Jordanian courts.
  - Studying and analyzing verdicts issued in press and publication cases to determine their compatibility with international standards and to identify the Jordanian judiciary trends in dealing with media-related cases.
4. Establishing a forum for exchanging expertise on the media freedom between judges, lawyers, and journalists
5. Providing legal advice to journalists through the following website: [www.cdfj.org](http://www.cdfj.org)
6. Activating the hotline service and providing journalists with the names and telephone numbers of lawyers working with the media legal aid unit to seek their assistance in urgent cases.



عمان - شارع الجامعة الأردنية - بجانب وزارة الزراعة  
شارع سعيد التميمي - صندوق البريد: ٩٦١١٦٧ عمان ١١١٩٦ الأردن  
الموقع الإلكتروني: [www.cdfj.org](http://www.cdfj.org)  
رقم الهاتف: ٩٦٢ ٦ ٥١٦.٨٢  
رقم الفاكس: ٩٦٢ ٦ ٥٦.٢٧٨٥