

# **NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONS AND THE VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN IN URBAN AREA**

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By

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## INTRODUCTION:

All communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, yet civilian women and girls face different risks and dangers in armed conflict compared to those faced by civilian men and boys, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex, they experience all physical, emotional and sexual forms of violence. And yet they are normally excluded from all formalized peace processes including negotiations, preventing, managing and resolving conflict and not least in building up societies after conflict.

During the past years our network was part of the **Jordanian National commission for activation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) on women and peace**. The commission plan intended to put Jordan in a better position to enhance women's influence and participation and strengthen the protection of women during armed conflicts, and to provide a framework for ensuring that Security Council resolution 1325 is integrated into all our peace and security efforts.



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Jordan takes these efforts seriously for conflicts in our region affected all aspect of our daily life and even though there wasn't any conflict or wars in Jordan for decades, yet our country was affected by the political uprising that swept the middle East region, four of the five countries that surrounded Jordan have witness all forms of conflict, civil wars, terrorist attack and uprising, these conflicts affected Jordan with the growing numbers of refugees and the threat of being part of the conflict by smuggling weapons or being target for terrorist attack . This was translated into more unemployment, tougher financial situations, greater poverty and increase in crimes. Jordan, the safe haven for all those deprived of their homeland, belongings and stability, has been the host country for both the Iraqi and Palestinian refugees and now the Syrian refugees. And to give you sense of how big is the issue of refugees for small country with poor resources like Jordan, it is enough to know that the fourth largest city in Jordan now is Al Zaartary refugee camp which was established to host the Syrian refugees. Along with the Syrian refugees Jordan host around half million Iraqi refugees and almost half of Jordan total population are Jordanian form a Palestinian roots who fled the wars during the past decades and huge number of them still live refugee camps.



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## WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT OF JORDAN:

Jordan total population is around 7 million, Women make 48% of Jordanian population, recent decades in Jordan have seen increasing interest in working to advance women's empowerment and participation in public life and decision making process, this interest has been reflected in the achievements relating to women's rights and raising women's status in society.

Among these **Achievement** was:

- The tangible progress achieved whether in the area of policies, legislation or measures adopted to achieve gender equality and advancing the status of women throughout the Kingdom.
- The enacting of protection from domestic violence law, which is considered to be the first of its kind in the Arab region.



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- Continuous narrowing has been observed in the qualitative gap in many areas where women have been able to accede some leading positions in the Legislative Authority, as senators or deputies, as well as the Executive Branch as ministers, secretaries general, ambassadors, governors and directors general. Also Quota's helped in increasing the number of women in municipalities' councils. Women have also contributed to undertakings by regional and international organizations and held positions in the international and national judiciaries.
- Improvements have been significant regarding women's ability to ascertain education and medical care, with their shares in terms of life expectancy and educational achievement where women now outnumber men. No position is closed to Jordanian women any more.

In spite of remarkable accomplishments, the country continues to face a number of **Challenges** such as:

- Female participation rate in the labor force in Jordan is only 15%. Overall, the unemployment rate in Jordan of women is 25.4% while it is 9.6% for men. Women with degrees have an unemployment rate that is almost three times as high as that of men with degrees.



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- Jordanian women make 52% of voter, yet their political participation still depends on quota, for example since the women had the right of participation in parliament, only 6 women were able to win seats in parliamentary throw election .
- Jordanian women still can't give nationality to their children and as we mentioned earlier with this huge number of refugees more and more women suffering for marrying non Jordanian, which prevent their kids from the appropriate health care and education.
- Along with the previous challenges, women in Jordan facing the same problems that women around the world face, such as violence, gender discrimination, harassment, and abuse.



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## WOMEN'S ROLE IN PEACE BUILDING PROCESS:

As I mentioned before our network was part of “the Jordanian National commission for activation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) on women and peace “ this commission -which was headed by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) in collaboration with civil society- was responsible of the National Action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 this action plan stipulates increasing the number of women in security forces and in the army.

The National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 to advance women, peace and security has been drafted and it is still awaiting official endorsement. Likewise, there are no national legal frameworks specified to women's rights and women, peace and security. Jordan is in need of the mapping of the processes on developing policy frameworks on security sector institutions and the representation of women on every level and in all negotiations when it comes to peace and security.



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## GOALS OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN :

- Increase women's participation in decision-making, at all levels.
- Increase the participation of Jordanian women in international peace keeping forces, and involving them in peace process and negotiations.
- Integration of Security Council resolution 1325 on the national level.
- End violence based on gender and discrimination against women.
- Protection and empowerment of refugee women.



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## WOMEN IN THE ARMY:

In 1994, the Directorate of Women's Affairs was established to safeguard the rights of women in the Jordanian Armed Forces and allow them to reach their full potential. also Jordan has started to deploy women in peace-keeping forces; and as we know that some time women are better-placed to carry out a number of crucial tasks, including interviewing victims of sexual and gender-based violence, working in women's prisons, assisting female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life and mentoring female cadets at police academies. But when it comes to national disarmament initiatives, women are not consulted. Disarmament will remain an issue of concern in Jordan and in the neighboring Arab countries because of the internal conflicts; therefore, peace and security are essential to salvage the region from conflicts and wars.



The main field of Jordanian Women's participation in the peacekeeping forces was in Afghanistan and Darfur, Where their duties was varied between educating woman and focusing on the female schools to accomplish this task, preventing violence against woman, conducting social services programs for woman (arts and crafts, clothing industry and wool-knitting), strengthening the leading role of woman in the society. Contributing to the promotion of wall-building projects around the female schools to make them feel comfortable of going to schools, and coordinating with small loans to help them establish productive projects based on agriculture ,arts and crafts and clothing industry.



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*“The growing number of armed conflicts and the violations associated with them has resulted in an increase in forced internal displacement and refugee flows. As a rule of thumb, more than 75 per cent of displaced people are women and children, and in some refugee populations they constitute 90 per cent.” UN women, fact sheet No 5*



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## REFUGEE WOMEN (CASE STUDY OF SYRIAN REFUGEE IN JORDAN):

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in March 2010 more than a million Syrians entered into Jordan looking for safety. around 15,000 of these Syrian refugees were hosted in the transit facilities of Ramtha and the tented camp of Za'atari (Mafraq), while the vast majority were scattered within the local host community. With no improvements in Syria's security situation, Syrians steadily continue to arrive in Jordan.

Two-thirds of Syrian refugees in Jordan reside outside of camps, in urban and rural communities throughout the country. They face unique challenges, from meeting the cost of living and accessing basic services to acclimating to their host communities and coping with intense psychosocial distress. Women and children, who make up 80% of Jordan's Syrian refugee population, are vulnerable to an increased risk of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, yet have limited opportunities to access safe spaces or social services.



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### Gender based violence:

According to study made by the Jordanian women's union (JWU) 71% of Syrian women refugees witness some kind of violence (physical, emotional, and verbal) 58% were financially abused, 21% of them were sexually harassed. Study of the states of Syrian refugees in Jordan, JWU 2013.

### Early Marriage:

Is a common experience for Syrian girls, Yet the practice is perceived to be even more prevalent, the sense of economic and physical insecurity that, among other factors, drive early marriage is amplified in displacement and it more likely for a young girl to be married to a much older man, a man of Jordanian nationality, because he may be perceived as more capable of providing her with protection in an unsafe or unfamiliar environment.

### Accessing Basic Resources and Specialized Services

Among Syrian refugees in Jordan is highlighted an area of increasing concern, putting children at risk of abuse and exploitation. The government allow Syrian children to attend public schools for free just as Jordanian, and to benefit from the public health care yet children still join the labor in order to contribute in the household's income, Among those girls who were employed in either domestic work or agriculture, both of which are known to be high-risk sectors for physical abuse and sexual exploitation.





## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:**

In 2008, a new law for the "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence" was issued in the Official Gazette. The main objective of the law is “to protect the unity and wellbeing of the family, reduce and put in order legal procedures to protect the abused of domestic violence”. The law also stipulates follow up meeting between the abuser and teams of family consolidation and a set of preventive interventions.

Parallel to this, new departments on domestic violence in the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Social Development were established and the Jordanian National Commission for Women-JNCW, founded an ombudsman’s office to receive complaints and forward them to the appropriate authorities for follow-up. One Panel at the High Criminal Court has been created to look into and expedite the rendering of judgment in case of “honor” killings and to unify these judgments, but in spite of this, the efforts are still too limited to address honor killings efficiently. Beside Jordanian women the department of family protection support and provide help to the non Jordanian women who face any form of abuse or violence.

## **THE CONDITIONS OF VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED WOMEN:**

There is a need to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas in Jordan and to empower the poor. However, many NGO's are focusing on providing services, projects and trainings in rural areas on topics that range from reproductive health to human rights and political participation. The increase of women participation in municipality council by giving them 25% of seats by quota helped in making women represented in every municipality during the municipality election that held a month ago women managed to occupy 35.9% of seats in some rural municipalities women outnumbered men.



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**Thank you**