



Jordanian Center for Labor Rights (Workers' House)

Annual Report

On the Conditions of the Jordanian Labor Market and Labor Rights 2024

May 2025

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Introduction

This comprehensive annual report is the second publication issued by the Jordanian Labor Rights Center “Workers’ House” within its series of national reports on the state of the labor market and labor rights in Jordan, following the first report published in 2023. This report comes as an extension of the Center’s efforts to provide a systematic and well-documented analysis of labor market developments from a rights-based and developmental perspective, drawing on the latest national and international data, field monitoring, and comparative analysis of legislation and public policies.

This report focuses specifically on the year 2024, presenting the realities of employment, unemployment, working conditions, social protection, and trade union organization, with an in-depth analysis of government policies and related legislative developments, comparing them to the international decent work standards that the Kingdom has committed to. It seeks to assess the existing gaps between legal texts and practical implementation and to highlight the structural challenges and potential opportunities for reform.

The report has been prepared using an approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative analysis and employs a methodology that balances the review of economic and social indicators with the assessment of the extent to which fundamental labor rights are realized, especially concerning vulnerable groups such as women, youth, migrant workers, and workers in the informal economy.

The report aims to serve as a reference tool for policymakers, labor unions, civil society organizations, and researchers to support the formulation of policies that are fairer, more effective, and sustainable—policies based on the realities and actual needs of the Jordanian labor market and that uphold Jordan’s international commitments toward decent work, social protection, and economic justice.

With its in-depth analysis and practical recommendations, this publication aspires to contribute to placing labor issues back at the forefront of public policy priorities, as they represent the true entry point for promoting sustainable development and achieving economic and social stability in Jordan.

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the conditions of the Jordanian labor market and labor rights during the year 2024, in the context of complex challenges where economic, demographic, and social factors intersect, directly impacting employment opportunities, working conditions, and the associated legal and social protections.

Despite the announced government efforts within the framework of the Economic Modernization Vision, their outcomes at the employment level remain limited and intangible. The overall unemployment rate reached 21.4%, while youth unemployment exceeded 46.6%, and female unemployment reached 32.9%, indicating a structural crisis in the economy's ability to create decent and sustainable job opportunities, and revealing a clear imbalance in the distribution of opportunities, resources, and professional empowerment among social groups.

In this context, a sharp gap emerges between the outputs of the educational system and the actual needs of the productive sectors, in addition to the significant expansion of the informal economy, which now absorbs more than half of the workforce without any legal or social protection. This increases the labor market's fragility, weakens job stability, and undermines decent work standards.

Regarding labor rights, the report reveals the continued shortcomings in the protection and legislative framework, especially concerning freedom of association, wage equality, and working conditions in highly vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and domestic work. It also highlights the weakness of inspection and oversight mechanisms, which limits workers' ability to defend their rights.

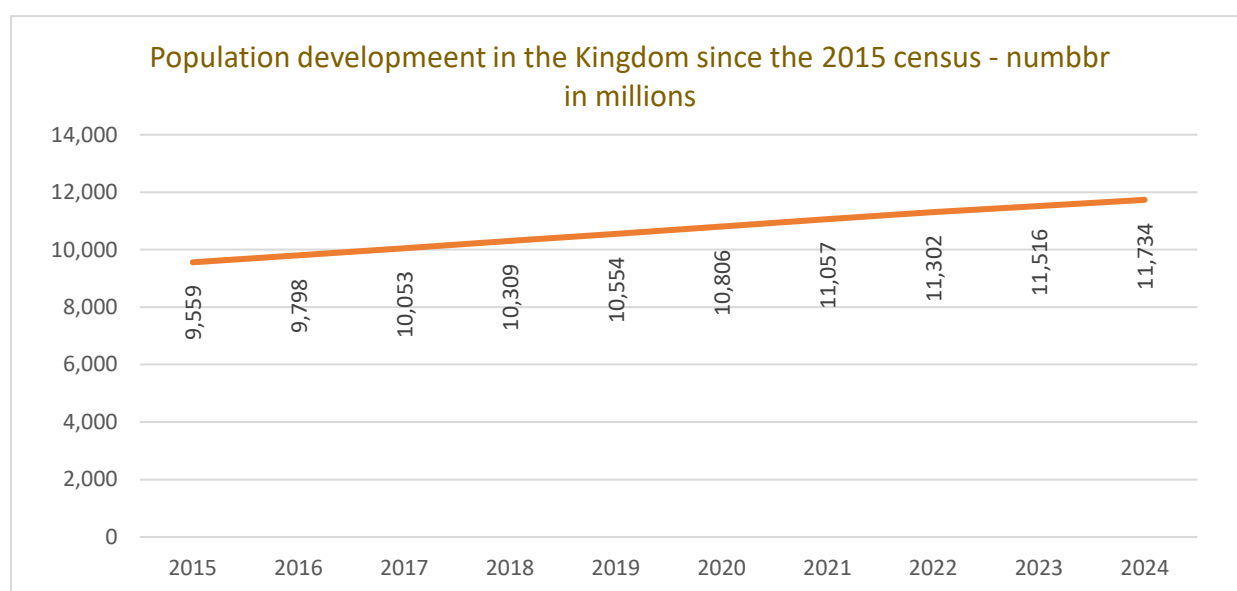
The report puts forward a set of strategic and reform recommendations addressing the need to restructure labor legislation to expand the scope of legal protection, develop employment policies, strengthen social protection, support labor unions, and achieve actual equality in the labor market. It also stresses the need to restore the importance of social dialogue as a central tool for formulating public policies and enhancing economic and social stability.

Part One: Labor Market Conditions

Population Growth and Demographic Changes

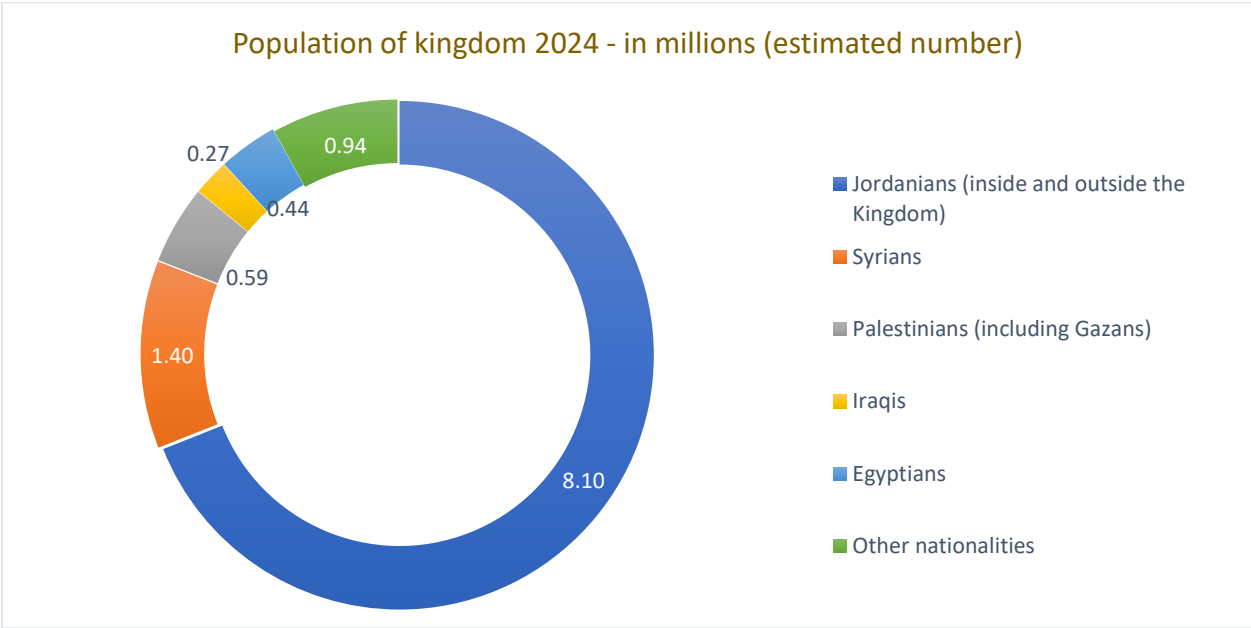
The population of Jordan in 2024 reached approximately 11.7 million, with an annual growth rate of 1.9%. According to official data, males make up 52.9% of the total population, compared to 47.1% females. Statistics also show that 62.8% of the population is under the age of thirty, indicating a distinctly young demographic structure.

While this demographic composition presents a promising opportunity in terms of labor force availability, it simultaneously poses a major challenge for public policies regarding the increasing pressures on the education sector, healthcare, the labor market, and public services, as a result of the annual rise in the number of entrants into the labor market.



Forced migrations, refugee influxes, and migrant labor have had a profound impact on reshaping the demographic balance, with the number of non-Jordanian residents estimated at about 3.6 million, equivalent to 31.0% of the total population. Syrians constitute the largest share of this group, with approximately 1.4 million individuals, including 558,000 registered as refugees, followed by Egyptians at around 435,000, Iraqis at approximately 270,000, and Palestinians without Jordanian citizenship at around 575,000, in addition to an estimated 944,000 individuals of other nationalities.

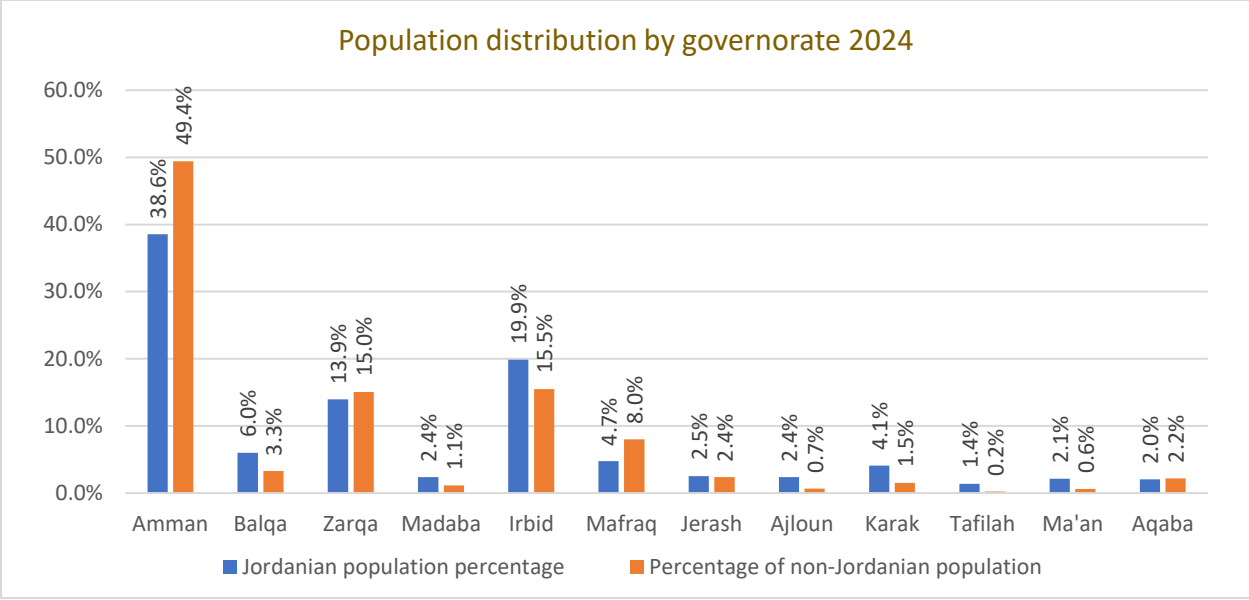
This demographic overlap has led to direct repercussions on the labor market, increasing pressure on public resources and infrastructure, as well as long-term social and demographic impacts that require integrated strategic responses.



Geographic Distribution of the Population

Demographic indicators reveal a noticeable population concentration in three main governorates: the capital, Amman, alone accounts for about 41.9% of the total population, followed by Irbid Governorate at 18.5%, and then Zarqa at 14.3%. Data also indicate that approximately 80.4% of non-Jordanian residents are concentrated in these three governorates, with about half of them residing in Amman alone. Additionally, around 91% of the population lives in urban areas.

This unbalanced geographic distribution reflects a clear imbalance in economic development opportunities, job availability, and public services. It also deepens geographic disparities in living standards and contributes to reinforcing patterns of internal migration toward major cities. These trends increase the pressure on infrastructure and basic services in urban areas, calling for balanced planning and comprehensive development that takes into account local specificities and reduces excessive population concentration.



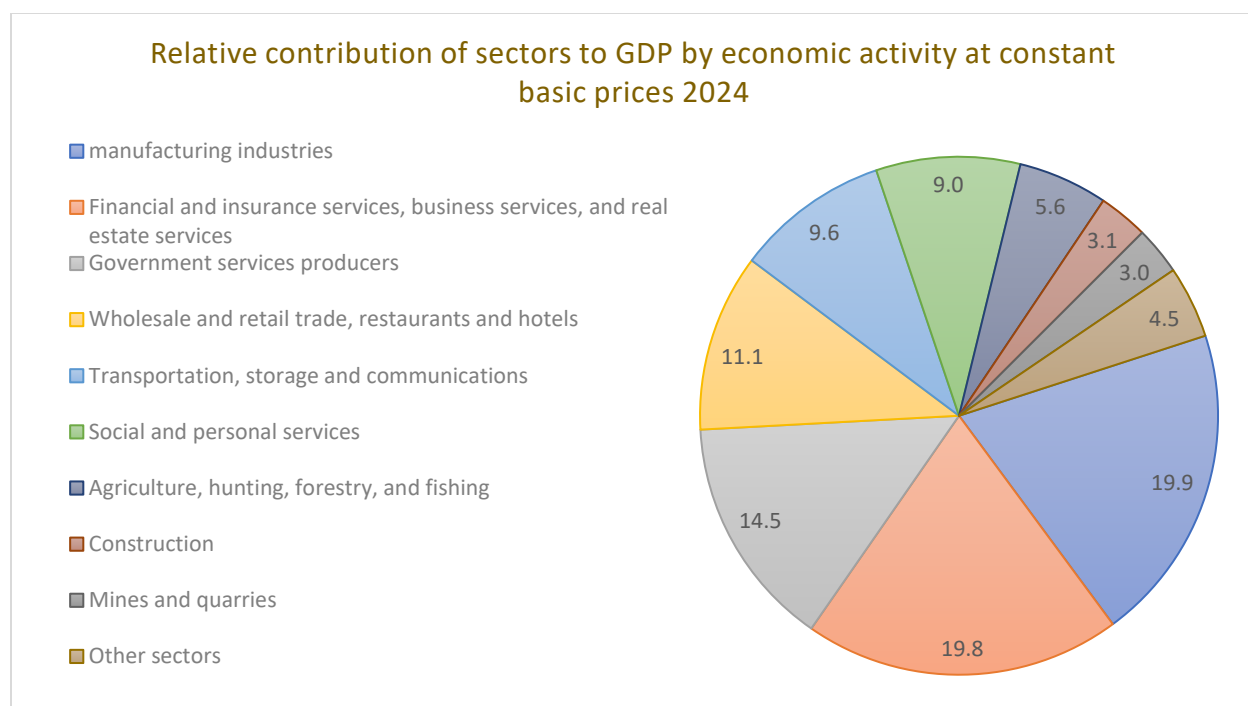
The Impact of Migration and Population Growth on Development

The accelerated demographic shifts, along with waves of external migration linked to regional crises, particularly in Iraq and Syria, have led to enormous pressures on Jordan’s infrastructure and natural resources. These shifts have contributed to a decrease in per capita GDP and increased competition for job opportunities, especially in the informal sectors that absorb a large segment of non-Jordanian labor.

In light of these challenges, the state’s ability to capitalize on what is known as the “demographic dividend”—a critical stage characterized by a high proportion of the working-age population compared to others—has declined. This stage represents one of the fundamental pillars of national development strategies, and maximizing this opportunity is an essential condition for raising workforce productivity, achieving the goals of sustainable development, and enhancing economic and social stability.

General Economic Indicators

The Jordanian economy recorded moderate growth during 2024, reaching about 2.5%, while the growth rate in the fourth quarter reached 2.7%. Despite forecasts of a decline in growth to 2.4% due to ongoing regional tensions, some economic sectors showed positive performance. The agricultural sector achieved strong growth in the fourth quarter, reaching 8.4%, followed by the manufacturing sector at 4.9%, then the extractive industries sector at 4.5%, and the electricity and water sector at 4.2%. In contrast, the construction sector experienced a slight decline of -0.9%, and the performance of the government services producers sector decreased by -0.5%.



These indicators represent a partial reflection of the objectives of the Economic Modernization Vision launched by the government as a strategic framework to stimulate growth and create job opportunities, especially in promising productive sectors. The vision aims to double the contribution of the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors to the gross domestic product and to create around 260,000 job opportunities by 2033. However, despite this progress, the Jordanian economy still faces deep structural challenges that make it vulnerable to regional and global fluctuations, particularly in sensitive sectors such as tourism, transport, and foreign trade, which requires enhancing economic resilience and expanding the base of sustainable growth.

The government has also continued implementing fiscal reform programs, which has led to curbing public spending, particularly on social sectors, and has imposed additional pressures on the labor market, especially regarding the public sector's ability to expand employment. Conversely, the private sector has been unable to compensate for this decline due to high operating costs (energy, taxes, transportation) and the decline in citizens' purchasing power.

At the same time, the initiatives announced under the Economic Modernization Vision have not produced tangible results in the labor market by the end of 2024, as the unemployment rate remained high, particularly among youth, with weak quality in the newly created jobs. These indicators reveal a gap between general economic policies and employment programs, as economic growth has not been accompanied by a tangible improvement in decent work indicators, confirming the need to align economic policies with labor market needs, especially for vulnerable groups.

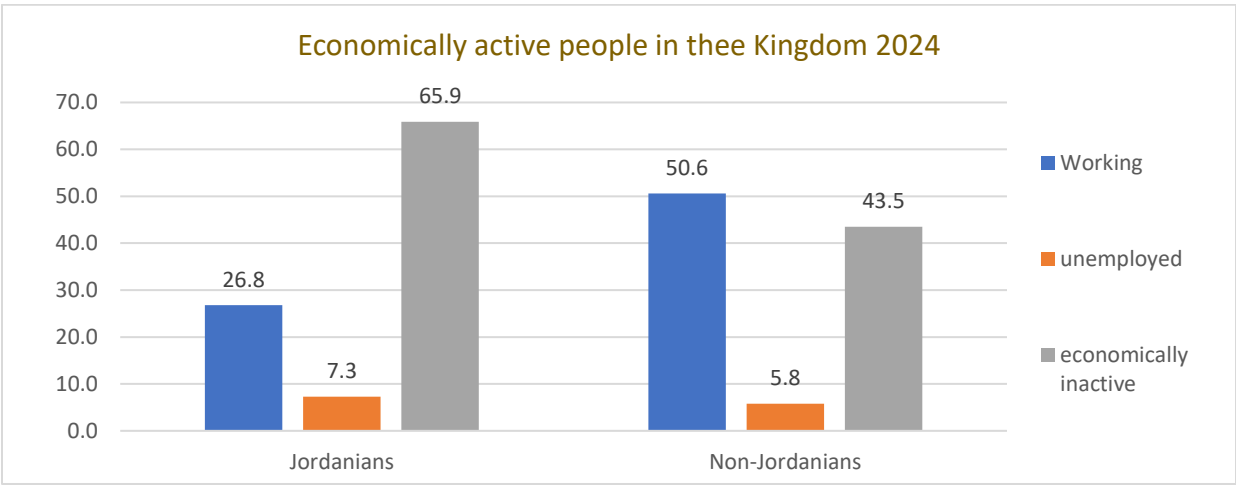
Labor Market Indicators

1- Economic Participation

The number of working-age individuals (15 years and older) in Jordan is approximately 7.721 million, of whom 5.886 million are Jordanians and 1.835 million are non-Jordanians. Despite this broad demographic base, the economic participation rate of Jordanians remains low, standing at only 34.1% according to 2024 data.

The 2024 labor market indicators show the persistence of structural challenges that hinder the national economy’s ability to generate sufficient and decent job opportunities. The revised economic participation rate for Jordanians reached 34.1%, which is a slight improvement compared to the 33.2% recorded in 2023, but it does not reflect a qualitative shift in the economy’s capacity to mobilize available human resources. The rate remains low and reveals a significant gap in utilizing human potential, especially among women and youth.

The figures reveal a large gender gap, as the economic participation rate for males reached 53.4%, while it did not exceed 14.9% for females, making women’s participation in Jordan among the lowest globally and confirming the continued structural gap in women’s economic empowerment. This disparity reflects a dual challenge: on one hand, the economy’s weak ability to generate qualitative and sustainable job opportunities, and on the other, the persistence of cultural and institutional barriers that prevent the effective integration of women and youth into the labor market.



2- Unemployment and Employment

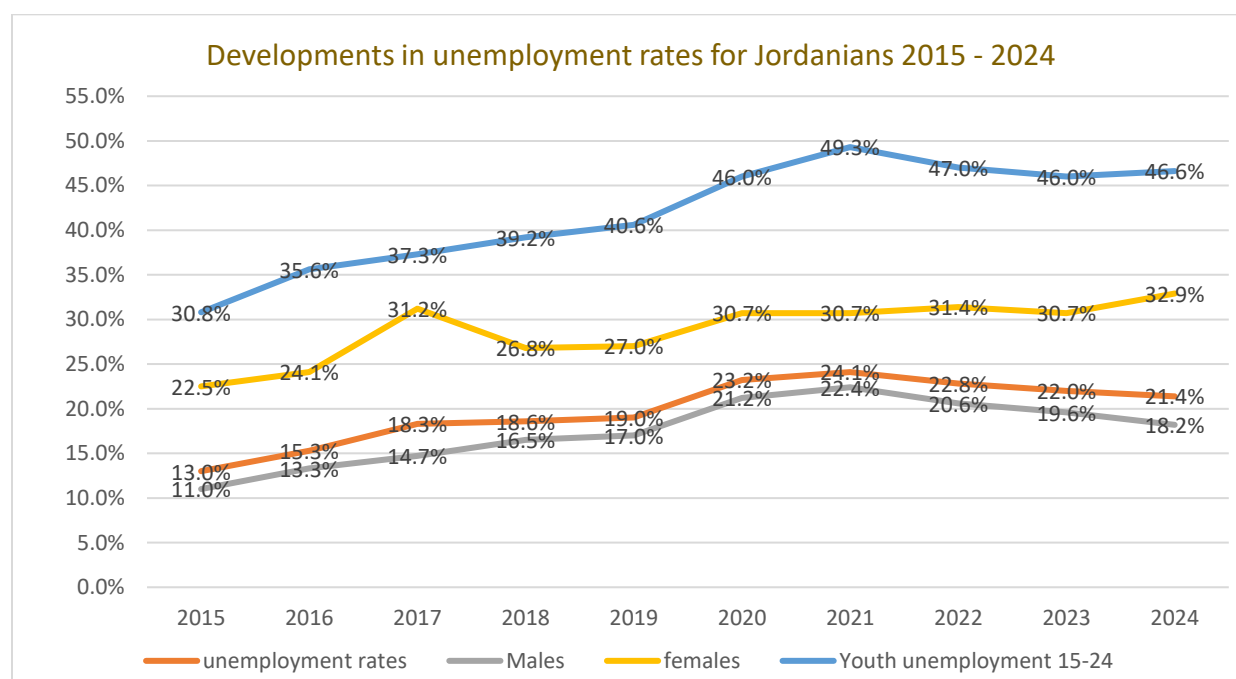
Statistics indicate that the percentage of employed Jordanians does not exceed 20.4% of the total Jordanian population aged over 15 years, amounting to approximately 1.46 million individuals, of

whom 81% are males and 19% are females. Employment is mainly concentrated in three sectors: public administration and education, commercial services, and manufacturing industries.

These figures highlight the limited capacity of the economy to absorb employment, both in terms of the number of available opportunities and their quality. Despite a slight decline in the unemployment rate from 22.0% in 2023 to 21.4% in 2024, this decrease does not necessarily reflect structural improvement but is largely attributed to a decline in participation rates, particularly among women, and the continued inability of the labor market to create productive and sustainable jobs.

Despite government efforts over past decades to reduce unemployment, these efforts have not succeeded due to complex social and cultural interactions that have resulted in high population growth rates surpassing actual economic growth rates. Additionally, the expansion of access to education for all, with a focus on quantity rather than quality, has led thousands to enter the labor market with qualifications that do not align with or meet the needs of the labor market.

This reality highlights the gap between the outputs of the educational system and market needs, as well as the persistent challenges related to weak working environments and the declining capacity of productive sectors to generate qualitative and sustainable job opportunities. It also reveals the urgent need for economic and employment reforms focused on increasing economic empowerment, particularly for young people and women, and expanding the base of sectors capable of growth and employment.



2- Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is one of the most prominent challenges in the Jordanian labor market. Although young people constitute a large proportion of the potential labor force, statistics indicate that the unemployment rate in the 15–24 age group reached around 46.6% by the end of 2024, with a clear disparity between males (42.6%) and females (63.9%).

This reality reflects the fragility of the transition of this group from education to employment and the absence of institutional pathways that support this transition, along with the limited availability of practical training programs linked to life skills, the scarcity of attractive opportunities in the private sector, and the expansion of the informal economy, which draws in large segments of youth into jobs that lack sustainability, security, and legal protection. Young people suffer from weak job stability, especially amid the prevalence of irregular and seasonal work, which increases social frustration and pushes them toward migration or disguised unemployment.

3- The Education Gap

Data from 2024 indicates that unemployment rates rise with higher educational levels. The data shows that 57.3% of employed Jordanians hold educational qualifications of high school or below, indicating the labor market's heavy reliance on low-skilled labor. In contrast, the unemployment rate among holders of intermediate diploma degrees is 7.3%, while it rises sharply to 19.9% among holders of university degrees or higher, reflecting a clear mismatch between higher education outputs and labor market needs, especially with unemployment concentrated in oversaturated fields such as education, humanities, and management, as well as employment policies that have failed to absorb educated talent. The crisis is even more severe among educated women (diploma, bachelor's degree, or higher), where their unemployment rate exceeds 35.0%.

4- Women's Unemployment

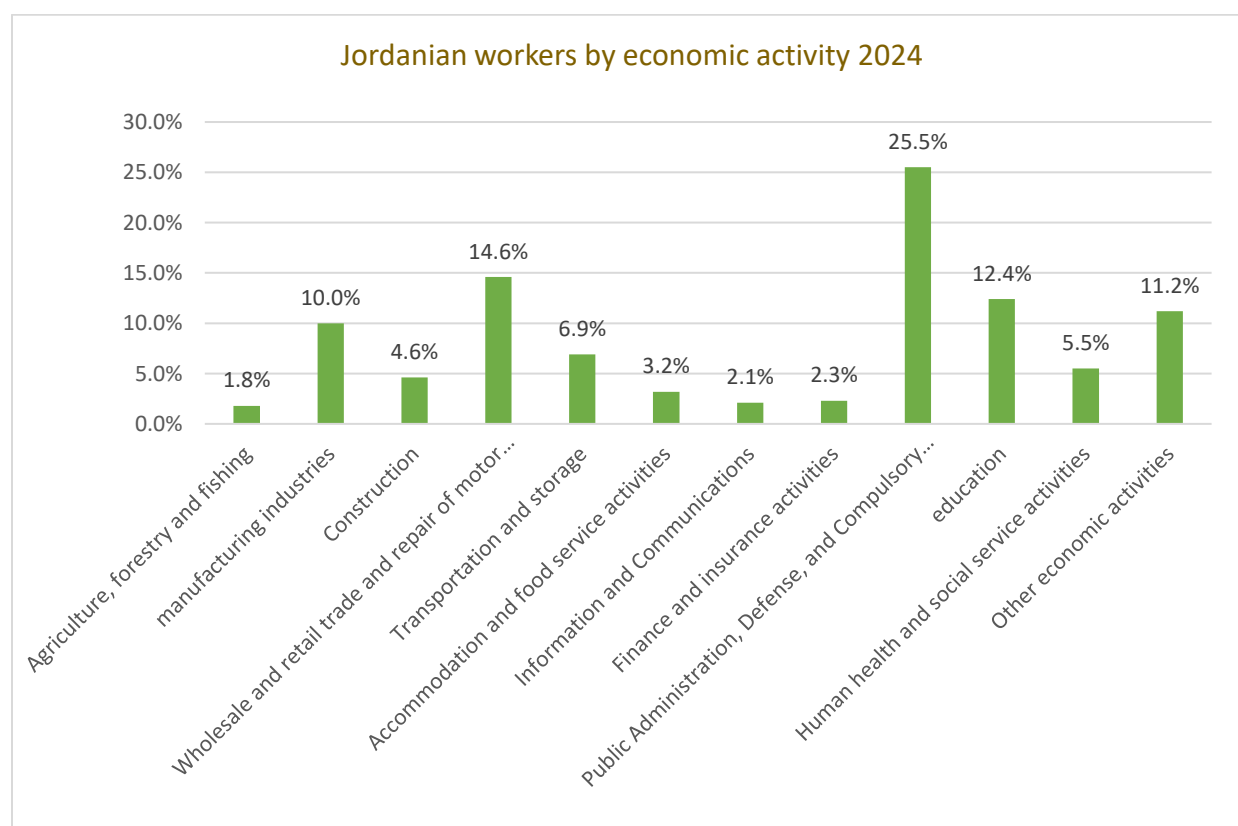
The unemployment rate among females reached 32.9%, and the indicators confirm the continued weakness of a work environment supportive of women, with cultural and institutional barriers hindering their effective integration into the labor market despite their academic excellence in many cases. Statistics indicate that about 50.0% of unemployed Jordanians suffer from long-term unemployment (more than 11 months), and this percentage rises among females to 63.4%, pointing to the weakness of rehabilitation and reintegration programs, skill erosion, and the lack of sufficient incentives to return them to the labor market, which exacerbates the burden on already insufficient social protection networks.

The data indicates that women are concentrated in the education and healthcare sectors, while men dominate sectors such as construction and transportation. This distribution reflects the persistence of stereotypes in the labor market, in addition to the absence of effective policies to integrate women into non-traditional sectors.

5- Sectoral Distribution

In terms of occupational distribution, unemployment reaches its highest levels in teaching and engineering professions due to market saturation and the weak alignment between education and the needs of both the public and private sectors. Unemployment is also high among Jordanians in agricultural and construction professions, as they tend to avoid working in these fields because of low wages and difficult working conditions, while these jobs are often filled by migrant workers. Meanwhile, service and sales occupations have seen relative expansion, yet they still suffer from weak job stability and low rates of social protection coverage.

The crisis is clearly reflected in the absence of future employment sectors such as the industrial sector, which still has limited capacity to lead the employment process, as it absorbs only about 10.0% of the total employed Jordanians. Emerging sectors such as technology and communications continue to attract only a small proportion of employed Jordanians, about 2.1%, reflecting weak employment policies and shortcomings in linking the educational system to the needs of the future labor market, in addition to the absence of an enabling environment that encourages young people to engage in these promising sectors.



Patterns of Unemployment

The unemployment indicator in Jordan is used as a general index to express the current performance of the labor market; however, it does not reflect the true reality of the number of unemployed individuals. The International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of unemployment generally keeps this indicator low because it includes three basic characteristics: the individual must be unemployed, able to work, and actively seeking work during the reference period. This makes it difficult to measure the actual number of people searching for jobs, leading to poor estimation of unemployment figures, especially in obtaining accurate responses to the questions posed in labor force surveys and in how representative the sample is of all cities in the governorates.

The patterns of unemployment in Jordan are diverse and interrelated, forming a complex web of social and economic challenges that hinder the achievement of full and decent employment and cast a negative shadow over development efforts. Relying solely on reading the general unemployment rate is insufficient to understand the nature of the crisis, as it is necessary to delve into the analysis of unemployment characteristics in terms of its duration, the most affected groups, and its occupational and geographic distribution.

1- Long-term Unemployment

Among the most serious patterns of unemployment is long-term unemployment. Data from 2024 indicate that about 50.0% of unemployed Jordanians have been unemployed for 11 months or more—a high percentage that reflects the difficulty of reintegration into the labor market after a period of absence. It points to the existence of broad segments gradually exiting the production cycle. This pattern is more severe among women, where their rate reaches 63.4% compared to 43.2% for men, leading to skill erosion, increased reliance on insufficient social protection networks, exacerbation of psychological and social effects, and increased costs of reintegration through rehabilitation and reintegration programs.

The high rate of long-term unemployment is attributed, in addition to weak economic performance and its inability to provide sufficient job opportunities, to the mismatch between acquired skills and labor market requirements, the lack of vocational and technical training opportunities, and the excessive reliance on the public sector as the main source of employment.

2- Disguised Unemployment

In parallel, the labor market witnesses the spread of disguised unemployment, where many individuals are recorded as employed even though they work in jobs that do not match their qualifications and do not provide them with adequate income or legal protection. This phenomenon is largely concentrated in the informal economy, especially in agriculture, low-wage services, and

seasonal work, creating a state of “disguised economic fragility” within the officially employed category. It affects the accuracy of statistical data and limits the state’s ability to design effective interventions.

3- Seasonal Unemployment

Seasonal unemployment is linked to production patterns in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and construction, which rely on temporary and migrant labor due to low wages and poor working conditions. The danger of this type of unemployment lies in its failure to be captured in official statistics, which leads to underestimating the actual size of unemployment and deprives workers in these sectors of forms of legal and social protection.

4- Educated Unemployment

Educated unemployment is one of the most prominent manifestations of the mismatch between the education system and the labor market in Jordan. The unemployment rate among Jordanians with university degrees (bachelor’s or higher) reached about 19.9% in 2024, while among females it recorded 20.0%. This is linked to the economy’s inability to absorb young talent, especially in oversaturated fields such as education, humanities, and management, pushing skilled workers toward migration or causing women to withdraw from the labor market under the weight of frustration and the absence of attractive alternatives. It is also due to the mismatch between academic specializations and labor market needs and the lack of practical training and career guidance programs.

5- Geographic Disparities in Unemployment

On the geographic level, disparities between governorates appear as one of the most prominent imbalances in the labor market. Although the general unemployment rate reached 21.4% in 2024, peripheral governorates such as Ma’raq and Ma’an recorded higher rates of 23.2%, compared to the lowest rate in Aqaba at 17.3%. In the capital, Amman, the number of unemployed individuals reached 70,821, accounting for nearly half of the total unemployed in the Kingdom. This is attributed to population density, the concentration of universities and training centers, and the wave of internal migration in search of job opportunities.

It is also noted that the unemployment rate in rural areas is higher compared to urban areas, recording 22.4% compared to 21.3%. This is attributed to the decline in investment in the agricultural sectors, the shrinking of local development programs, and the weakness of infrastructure and basic services in villages and small towns, leading to developmental marginalization that deepens geographic disparities in employment opportunities.

The absence of justice in the distribution of government and private projects, disparities in public service levels, and the limited scope of decentralized employment policies contribute to perpetuating this gap. Training and employment programs are often concentrated in the capital and major cities, while peripheral governorates remain outside the circle of institutional focus and adequate funding. Additionally, employment policies do not take into account the specific characteristics of the governorates in terms of professional specializations or available economic capabilities, which weakens the effectiveness of these policies in stimulating balanced sectoral development.

Finally, unemployment in Jordan cannot be addressed through general or comprehensive approaches alone; true solutions require a precise understanding of the nature of unemployment, its various patterns, and its geographic and social distribution. This enables the development of fair and flexible employment policies that consider the particularities of different regions and groups and contribute to building a more inclusive and sustainable development model.

Job Opportunities

The Jordanian labor market witnessed modest development in job creation during 2023 and 2024, with continued reliance on the private sector as the main source of employment. In 2023, approximately 95,342 job opportunities were created, while about 47,907 new opportunities were provided in the first half of 2024. The apparel and leather industry sector has been relatively active, providing about 1,500 new job opportunities during the first nine months of 2024, supported by notable growth in its exports. Additionally, the information and communications technology (ICT) sector has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors in Jordan, contributing to employing Jordanians and generating high revenues, alongside promising opportunities growing in the fields of security and safety, medical technology, renewable energy, water technology, and smart agriculture.

Despite recent developments in the labor market, the data still indicates significant disparities in the distribution of job opportunities across economic sectors. The public sector still absorbs a large proportion of Jordanians, with about 37.3% of workers employed there, particularly in education and health, while the private sector absorbs about 61.7%. Despite this significant representation, the data shows a decline in the number of Jordanians working in the government sector, which is attributed to recent government policies that have reduced job security levels and cut benefits, thus diminishing the sector's attractiveness, especially for qualified talent who now prefer to seek more stable and rewarding opportunities in other sectors.

Statistics show that about 25.5% of Jordanian workers are concentrated in public administration, defense, and compulsory social security activities, compared to relatively low percentages in productive sectors: Jordanians working in manufacturing industries do not exceed 1.0%, in

agriculture 1.8%, and in construction 4.6%. This unbalanced distribution is attributed to low wages, poor working conditions, and the absence of professional incentives in these sectors.

From a gender perspective, the data reveals continued disparities in the distribution of work between Jordanian men and women. Women are concentrated at 38.4% in the education sector, 15.2% in health, and 13.4% in public administration—sectors characterized by a governmental nature and offering a higher degree of job security. Meanwhile, men are distributed at 28.3% in public administration, 16.8% in wholesale and retail trade, and 10.5% in manufacturing industries. This disparity is explained by the lack of attractiveness of the private sector for women, whether in terms of wages or working hours, or due to the absence of a supportive institutional environment such as nurseries or flexible work systems.

Labor Market Policies

The Jordanian labor market suffers from chronic structural imbalances that hinder its ability to achieve full and decent employment. Amidst slowing economic growth, increasing numbers of new labor market entrants, and declining contributions from productive sectors, official policies remain unable to provide comprehensive responses to these accumulated challenges. New entrants—especially youth and women—face increasing difficulties in obtaining stable and sustainable job opportunities, while unemployment rates remain high or even rise among certain groups and regions.

Data indicates that the unemployment rate among Jordanian youth (ages 15–24) remains among the highest in the region, reaching 46.6% by the end of 2024, in the absence of effective national programs to facilitate the transition from education to work, the weakness of vocational training institutions, the limited linkage between educational program outputs and labor market needs, and the growing role of the informal economy in attracting large segments of youth without legal or social protection.

The experience of recent years reveals a lack of institutional coordination and the fragmentation of initiatives, as programs related to the labor market, employment, and training are distributed among several ministries and entities without a unified governance framework or standardized performance indicators. Often, simultaneous projects are launched by ministries such as Labor, Education, and Planning, but they lack an integrative vision, leading to wasted resources, duplicated efforts, and difficulty in measuring the actual impact on the labor market.

1- Educational Policies

A widening gap is evident between the education system and labor market needs, as the higher education system continues to graduate thousands of students in theoretical and saturated

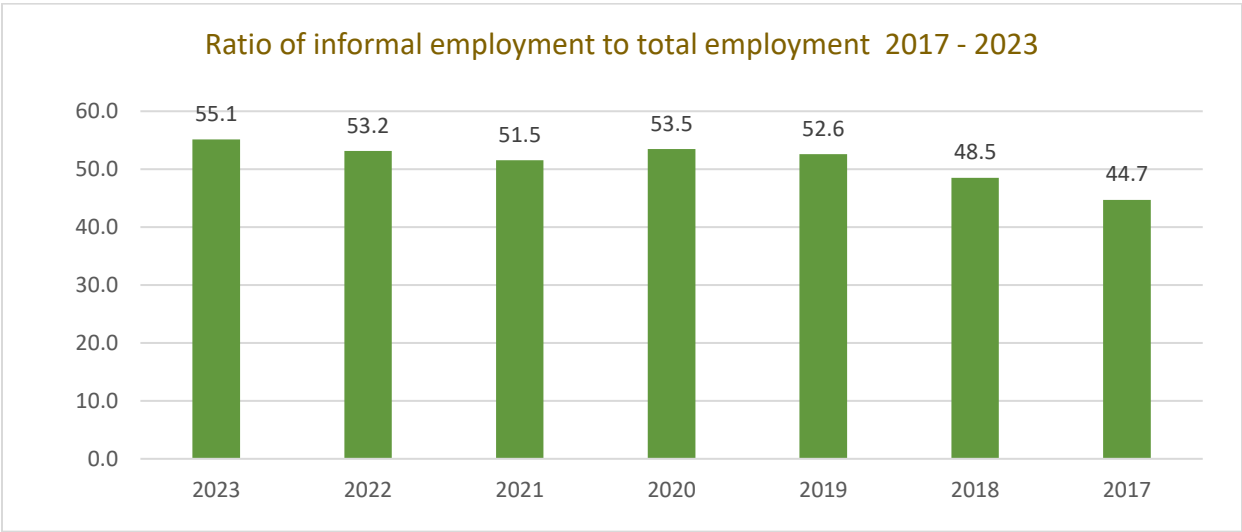
disciplines such as education, humanities, and administrative sciences, while technical and vocational disciplines remain less attractive despite rising demand. Data from 2024 indicates that 19.9% of bachelor's degree holders or higher suffer from unemployment, reflecting a lack of coordination between higher education institutions and the private sector, and the weakness of early academic and career guidance systems.

2- Gender Gap

The gender gap is one of the most prominent challenges in the labor market, as the female economic participation rate did not exceed 14.9% in 2024, while female unemployment rose to 32.9% compared to 18.2% for males. This gap is not solely due to cultural factors but also to the absence of a suitable work environment for women, in terms of the availability of nurseries, safe transportation, and flexible working hours, in addition to discrimination in employment conditions and the weakness of enforcement mechanisms related to job protection rights, especially in the private sector.

3- Informal Economy

The informal economy, which constitutes about 26% of Jordan's economy, represents another structural challenge for employment policies, as it is estimated that about 55.1% of workers are active outside the formal framework, without legal contracts or social security coverage. Despite the clear size of the problem, government policies remain incapable of formulating an integrated national plan to integrate these groups, whether through incentive mechanisms or gradual regulation. The danger of this phenomenon is exacerbated by the fact that a large portion of this labor force belongs to vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and refugees, making them vulnerable to fragility and persistent poverty.

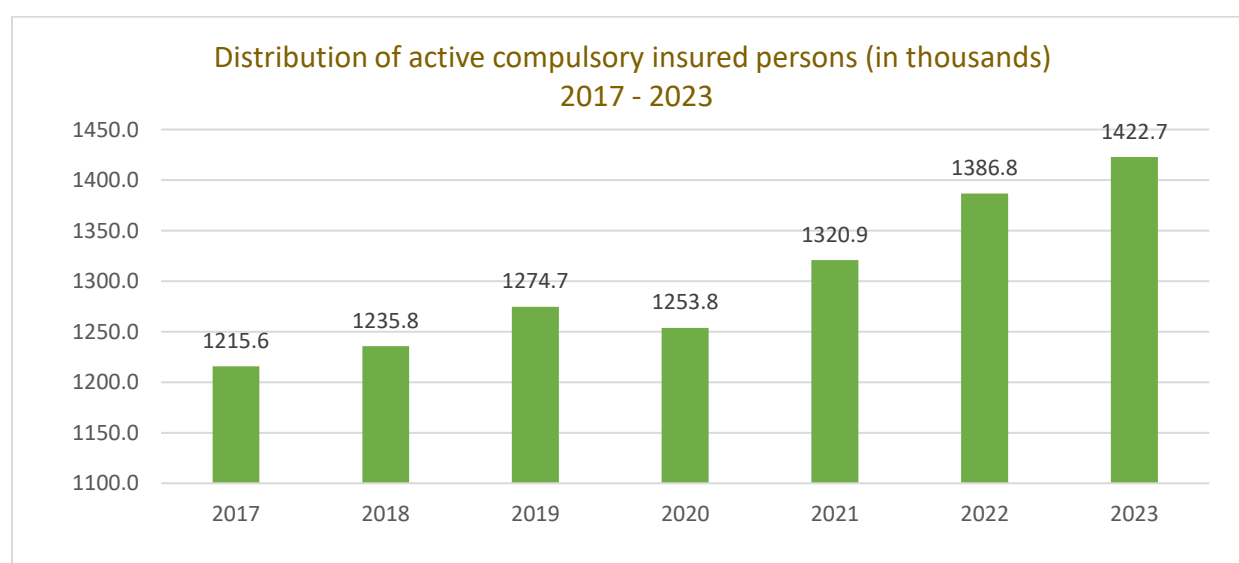


Regulating this sector requires adopting flexible policies that encourage workers to transition to formal employment without imposing financial or administrative burdens that may lead to the exclusion of vulnerable groups, while taking into account sectoral and geographic differences and the impact of economic crises in exacerbating the problems of this sector.

In this context, it is worth noting that Jordan had previously prepared, in 2015, the National Framework for the Transition of Workers from Informal to Formal Employment, which was the result of cooperation between the Ministry of Labor and the social partners with the support of the International Labour Organization. This framework aimed to develop a strategic plan to integrate informal workers into the formal labor system by providing them with legal and social protections and encouraging informal sector enterprises to obtain licenses and register through incentives and facilitations, while emphasizing the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders to ensure effective implementation. However, this framework remained suspended without actual implementation, which underscores the need today to review and develop it in line with current economic and social changes and to make it part of national labor and employment policies to achieve comprehensive development and sustainable social justice.

4- Social Protection

The number of individuals mandatorily covered by the social security system is about 1,422,709 people, while at the same time, nearly half of the labor force remains outside the social security umbrella, especially those working in the informal sector or self-employed, exposing them to a lack of protection from risks associated with work injuries, unemployment, or old age. Despite repeated legislative amendments, their implementation on the ground remains limited due to the weakness of inspection and awareness bodies and the absence of appropriate incentives to register workers.



5- Supporting Entrepreneurship

Despite the launch of numerous small project financing programs and empowerment initiatives, the environment remains unfavorable for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, which originally represent the backbone of any emerging economy. These projects face challenges that include bureaucracy, high taxes, difficulty accessing markets, and the absence of incentives, technical, and marketing support, leading many of them to shut down during their first years.

These accumulated challenges highlight the urgent need for a radical review of employment and economic policies through a unified national strategy based on a realistic and precise diagnosis of market needs and affected groups. It also requires activating the tripartite partnership between the government, employers, and labor unions. This strategy should include the development of effective measurement tools to monitor the real impact of programs, moving away from partial or seasonal solutions, and integrating employment policies within the overall development framework to enhance social justice, ensure equal opportunities, and lead to achieving decent work for all.

6- Skills and Vocational Training

Despite efforts made to improve the vocational training system through local and international partnerships, challenges persist, particularly the weak infrastructure of training centers, lack of qualified staff, absence of a national system for accreditation and evaluation of programs, and the continued gap between the skills acquired in training and those actually required in the market—especially in promising sectors such as industry, agriculture, and healthcare.

Indicators for 2024 show a growing demand for technical and vocational specialties such as computer science, programming, financial management, marketing, electronic engineering, and graphic design. Skills related to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data analysis, leadership, critical thinking, digital marketing, and effective communication have also emerged as among the essential skills required in the market. However, the gap remains between the skills available among job seekers and those sought by employers, particularly in the industrial and service sectors, as the general and university education systems remain insufficiently responsive to technological developments and the rapid transformations in the labor market.

In this context, official and joint efforts have been made to improve the vocational training and skills development system through partnerships between the Ministry of Labor, the Vocational Training Corporation, and international organizations such as UNESCO and the International Labour Organization. Initiatives have been launched aimed at enhancing the integration of persons with disabilities, providing specialized programs in occupational safety and health, and recognizing the prior experiences of workers in the informal sector among Jordanians and Syrian refugees. Notable initiatives include a joint project for the period 2024–2027 with UNESCO to

develop the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system and expand its linkage with the labor market, in addition to integrating British BTEC qualifications into national curricula through the Ministry of Education to reduce the gap between theoretical and practical skills.

Despite the importance of these efforts, their impact remains limited according to national and international assessments, due to the fragmentation of initiatives, weak coordination with the private sector, and the absence of a comprehensive national system to monitor and update the required skills, ensure training quality, and evaluate its outcomes. Various reports recommend the need to strengthen partnerships with higher education institutions, expand field-based practical training programs, and establish tax and legislative incentives for institutions that invest in training their employees.

The Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission, established in 2019 in response to the National Strategy for Human Resources Development, also plays an important role in supporting human resources development policies and linking them to the Jordanian labor market. It has a central role in improving the technical and vocational education and training system and enhancing alignment with the needs of economic sectors, particularly through the sectoral skills councils it forms in broad partnership with the private sector. These councils aim to study the needs of economic sectors, develop policies responsive to sector needs, accredit vocational and technical training providers, develop occupational standards, license training providers, and carry out other tasks related to technical and vocational education and training.

In 2024, the Pharmaceutical Industries Skills Council and the Creative Industries Skills Council were established, bringing the total number of sectoral skills councils to 15. Additionally, 107 occupational standards were developed across various sectors, alongside the licensing of training centers, accreditation of training programs, and the issuance of thousands of professional practice certificates.

These tasks reflect the importance of enhancing the designated role of the Commission in building practical bridges between training and employment by supplying the labor market with trained competencies, reducing the skills gap, and supporting youth and marginalized groups toward productive entry into the labor market. This requires the continued development of supportive policies and completing the integration with comprehensive national strategies as a key condition for enhancing the Commission's impact and achieving the sustainability of its results over the long term.

Part Two: The State of Labor Rights

Introduction

Labor rights represent the cornerstone in building a balanced and fair labor market that guarantees the dignity of working individuals and establishes production relations based on fairness and partnership. These rights are not viewed as privileges granted, but rather as legal and human entitlements stipulated in the constitution and enshrined in the international treaties and agreements to which Jordan has acceded, foremost among them the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, including the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the conventions related to discrimination, freedom of association, equal pay, occupational safety and health, among others.

Although national legislation—particularly the Labor Law, the Civil Service Bylaw, the Public Sector Human Resources Bylaw issued this year (2025), and the Social Security Law—includes many provisions aligned with these standards, practical implementation reveals a persistent gap between the legal framework and actual practice. This gap becomes increasingly apparent in light of the economic and demographic changes the Kingdom is experiencing, including rising unemployment rates, the expansion of the informal sector, challenges posed by changing work patterns, and the ongoing challenges in law enforcement and ensuring justice in access to rights.

This part of the report provides an in-depth analysis of the state of labor rights in Jordan during 2024 and the early months of 2025, in light of legislative changes, practical realities, and the outcomes of events and practices that have produced significant indicators of labor conditions and workers' rights. This analysis focuses on the key pillars underpinning the decent work framework, including the right to work, working conditions, social protection, trade union freedoms, non-discrimination, and all other rights related to the most marginalized groups, such as youth, women, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and child laborers.

The Right to Work

The right to work is one of the fundamental pillars of social justice and the concepts of comprehensive development. It is guaranteed by the Jordanian Constitution and the international agreements ratified by Jordan. However, the economic and social challenges facing the country continue to affect the full enjoyment of this right, especially amid high unemployment rates and the increasing number of new entrants to the labor market each year.

Updated data for 2024 indicates that the unemployment rate remains very high among youth, women, and university graduates. This is attributed to several factors, most notably the weak

alignment of educational and training policies with labor market needs despite measures taken to limit certain oversaturated or stagnant majors, as well as the absence of institutional linkage between vocational and academic education with employment requirements and genuine partnerships with representatives of economic sectors. This has led to the continued widening of the gap between supply and demand.

1- Institutional Challenges in Employing Job Seekers

Despite the designated roles of official institutions in this regard, particularly the Civil Service and Public Administration Bureau (which replaced the Civil Service Bureau) and public employment offices, their effectiveness remains limited. Statistics have shown that the percentage of job seekers using these channels does not exceed 27%, while the majority of job seekers rely on personal networks and acquaintances as the main means of job searching. This institutional weakness reflects the absence of an effective national strategy for career guidance and employment that links labor market requirements with public and private employment programs, contributing to the persistence of the mismatch between the available labor force and job opportunities.

As for vocational training, several initiatives and partnerships have been implemented with international organizations such as the International Labour Organization and UNESCO; however, the impact of these initiatives remains limited, especially in the absence of an approved national framework to assess output quality and measure the effect of training on actual employment opportunities. Available programs often fail to meet the needs of the most in-demand economic sectors, such as information technology, modern agriculture, and logistics services.

2- Challenges of the Informal Economy and New Forms of Work

International reports indicate that the percentage of those working in the informal economy in Jordan has risen to nearly 59% according to post-pandemic estimates, while the International Labour Organization estimates this percentage at about 55.1%, compared to about 48% before the pandemic according to official indicators. This category of workers often lacks legal and social protections, faces unstable working conditions, and receives low wages. It is notable that this type of work has increased among youth and women as a result of the difficulty in obtaining formal employment opportunities.

Additionally, the rapid change in work patterns—such as the spread of flexible work and remote work, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic—has created new challenges, as the legislative framework has not sufficiently kept pace with these transformations to ensure the protection of workers in these patterns, particularly concerning fair wage rights, working hours, and social insurance coverage.

3- Discrimination in Access to Work and Decent Work

Despite the presence of legal provisions affirming the right to work for all, reality shows that barriers continue to exist for certain groups, especially persons with disabilities, women, refugees, and the elderly. The weak adaptation of work environments for persons with disabilities and the absence of comprehensive employment plans that take into account the specific needs of each group have led to the marginalization of important labor forces and exacerbated the phenomenon of structural unemployment.

Furthermore, current employment policies do not clearly distinguish between merely providing job opportunities and ensuring decent work that meets the conditions of social protection, fair wages, and a safe working environment. A large percentage of the newly created opportunities are still concentrated in low-wage sectors with weak protections, preventing the achievement of the fundamental goal of the right to work as a means of empowering individuals and ensuring human dignity.

4- Weak Role of the Private Sector

The private sector plays a vital role in creating job opportunities; however, its contribution to providing decent job opportunities remains below expectations, especially in high-growth sectors such as technology and renewable energy. Here, the weakness of incentive policies to employ Jordanians in these sectors becomes apparent, as well as the need to link incentives provided to the private sector with clear employment commitments.

These challenges are exacerbated by the absence of an accurate and up-to-date national labor market database. The lack of detailed and updated information on sectoral and geographic labor supply and demand makes it difficult to develop effective employment policies based on precise scientific data. This underscores the need to establish a national labor market observatory that relies on the periodic updating of data and the continuous analysis of market trends.

5- Factors Hindering the Right to Work

In addition to challenges related to the structure of the labor market, education, and training, job seekers in Jordan face additional environmental and social obstacles that directly affect their ability to access available job opportunities. Chief among these barriers is the weakness of the public transportation system. The limited availability of affordable and reliable transportation, especially in peripheral and rural areas, poses a major challenge to the ability of young people and women in particular to engage in the labor market. Multiple studies have shown that the lack of appropriate transportation increases the economic participation gap and limits the ability of job seekers to access available jobs, even when opportunities exist.

Moreover, the work environment itself often acts as a repelling factor, whether due to weak compliance with the application of labor law standards in some sectors, the absence of supportive

environments for women and persons with disabilities, or the weak implementation of occupational safety and health procedures. This leads to the reluctance of wide segments to engage in certain professions and sectors that do not provide job security or respect workers' rights.

In addition, the vocational and technical training system, despite existing initiatives, still lacks a strong and direct connection to the dynamic needs of the market, whether in terms of the quality of required skills or keeping pace with modern technological transformations. This weakens graduates' chances of quickly integrating into the labor market.

As for women, the limited availability of supportive work environments represents an additional factor contributing to their low economic participation, especially given the scarcity of nearby or affordable childcare in workplaces and the persistence of rigid work patterns that do not offer flexible working hours or arrangements, despite legislation having approved such measures.

6- Requirements for Addressing the Challenges

All of these challenges point to the urgent need to review employment, education, and training policies from an integrated perspective that links economic growth with the generation of qualitative job opportunities. This should establish employment programs that consider market needs and the most affected groups, provide comprehensive protection for workers in the informal economy, and reshape policies to ensure the economic empowerment of all groups without discrimination, achieving a sustainable work environment based on the principles of justice and equality.

Occupational Safety and Health

The right to a safe and healthy work environment is one of the fundamental rights that protect the dignity of working individuals and is closely linked to decent work standards. In 2022, the International Labour Organization recognized this right as part of the fundamental rights at work. Despite the clear legal provisions in Jordanian legislation—foremost among them the Labor Law and the Social Security Law—the practical reality still indicates the presence of legislative and implementation gaps that hinder the achievement of a safe and sustainable work environment.

1- In Legislation

The Jordanian Labor Law regulates the general conditions of occupational safety and health in Articles (78–96), where it obligates employers to take all necessary measures to protect workers from work-related hazards. Article (85) also permits the issuance of special regulations for establishing safety committees and supervisors, providing preventive and medical care in addition to periodic check-ups and procedures to prevent hazards from machines and equipment. The

legislation requires employers to cover all expenses related to ensuring a safe work environment, including transportation and treatment in case of injury; however, it does not include general health insurance outside the scope of work.

The years 2023 and 2024 witnessed notable activity by the Ministry of Labor in reviewing and updating occupational safety and health legislation, following a long period during which these regulations had not been updated, as most of them were issued in 1997 and 1998.

In 2023, a set of new regulations was issued to replace previous ones, including the Regulation on the Formation of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and the Appointment of Supervisors in Institutions, the Regulation on Occupational Safety, Health, and Prevention of Occupational Hazards in Institutions, and the Regulation on Preventive and Curative Medical Care for Workers in Institutions. A set of new instructions was also issued, including: the Instructions for Classifying and Determining the Degree of Risk of Economic Activity, the Instructions for Risk Assessment in the Work Environment, and the Instructions for Identifying Types of Occupational Hazard Sources in the Work Environment and the Precautions Needed to Prevent Them.

In 2024, the Ministry continued its efforts in this area by issuing ministerial decisions that included mechanisms for implementing the regulations and instructions issued in the previous year. These decisions included: the Decision on Means and Devices for Medical First Aid for Workers in the Institution, the Decision to Approve the Model Occupational Safety and Health Policy for the Employer, as well as the approval of templates for the Work Accident and Injury Reporting Record, the Occupational Disease Reporting Record, and the Occupational Safety and Health Records that employers are required to maintain.

2- Monitoring Procedures

A review of reports on the achievements of monitoring efforts to enforce legislation indicates weak actual compliance with safety requirements by many employers, in addition to the limited effectiveness of government inspection bodies, whether in terms of the number of inspectors or their supervisory capacities, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises and peripheral industrial areas. Inspection teams suffer from a lack of human and material resources, which leads to limited coverage of establishments and weak capacity for effective oversight.

In this context, the year 2024 witnessed good performance in the field of labor inspection and occupational safety and health. The number of establishments visited by occupational safety and health engineers to monitor working conditions and follow up on corrections reached 14,511 visits. In the field of child labor, 294 cases of child employment were detected during the year, and actions were taken against employers, including 201 warnings and 181 violations. Additionally, 1,206 occupational safety and health supervisors were accredited during the year, and 271

occupational safety and health committees were formed within establishments, and 138 investigations were conducted into work accidents.

At the level of handling labor complaints, the Hemaya platform and the hotline received 11,030 complaints, of which 3,697 complaints were settled, while 287 complaints remained under process. Regarding warnings and violations, 7,095 warnings were issued in 2024, and 5,024 violations related to labor law breaches were recorded. However, the report does not specify the percentage or number of complaints, procedures, and violations specifically related to occupational safety and health matters, as the figures were mixed across all inspection matters, which limits the ability to develop a clear picture regarding occupational safety and health issues and the nature of the specific complaints and procedures.

3- Monitoring and Analysis

The Social Security Corporation issued its analytical report on work injuries for 2023, which highlighted a 14.2% decrease in the number of recorded injuries compared to 2022, with the number of injuries reaching 15,223, and a work injury recorded every 35 minutes instead of every 30 minutes previously. Injury-related fatalities also witnessed a 6.5% decrease, with 187 fatalities recorded compared to 200 fatalities in 2022.

The report highlighted the highest-risk sectors, where most injuries were concentrated in the manufacturing sector (34.7%), followed by the wholesale and retail trade sector (19.4%), and then the hotel and restaurant sector (11.1%). In terms of the nature of injuries, contusions ranked first, accounting for 44.7% of injuries, followed by wounds and fractures. The most common injuries were in the upper limbs (39.8%) and lower limbs (29.9%).

The Social Security Corporation attributes the recorded decline in work injuries to the launch of the Occupational Safety and Health Strategy 2023–2027, which aimed to develop a culture of safety in Jordanian workplaces, enhance the capacities of working personnel, expand media campaigns, and strengthen partnerships with governmental and private parties.

4- Challenges

There are still fundamental challenges facing the national occupational safety system, most notably the continued approach of addressing individual incidents without adopting a proactive approach based on prevention and prior risk monitoring. Additionally, there is weak coordination among the concerned institutions, fragmented data, and the absence of a unified national registry for work injuries and occupational diseases.

Moreover, the work injury insurance managed by the Social Security Corporation covers those who are mandatorily insured, but workers in the informal sector—estimated to account for more

than 55% of the total workforce—remain outside the scope of protection. This deepens the social vulnerability of these groups and weakens the system’s ability to achieve its comprehensive objectives.

5- The Agricultural Sector

The agricultural sector is one of the sectors most exposed to occupational safety and health risks despite its vital importance to the national economy and food security. Significant progress has been made in enhancing the rights of its workers through the issuance of the Agricultural Workers Regulation of 2021 and special instructions on inspection and occupational safety, which allowed agricultural workers to be covered under the provisions of the Labor Law.

However, the biggest challenge lies in enforcing these legislations on the ground, as agricultural workers continue to face high physical and occupational risks due to weak oversight and the inadequacy of qualified human resources. This calls for strengthening the specialized inspection capacities in agricultural labor affairs and developing necessary preventive programs for the sector in line with international standards. Additionally, Jordan should ratify ILO Convention No. 129 concerning labor inspection in agriculture, given the importance of this convention and its ratification in enhancing Jordan’s capacities in this field and attracting technical support.

6- Ways Forward

In light of all the above, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of the Occupational Safety and Health Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Work Accidents and Injuries (2023–2027), as well as an evaluation of its outcomes and effectiveness. It is necessary to adopt an integrated national plan to develop the occupational safety and health system, focusing on strengthening the legislative and practical framework, enhancing the efficiency of preventive inspection and oversight, developing a unified and accurate national database, expanding the scope of work injury insurance to include workers in the informal sector, and embedding a culture of safety as an essential part of workplace culture.

Despite the efforts made to develop the work environment and improve occupational safety and health conditions, challenges persist, especially given the low level of general awareness among some employers regarding safety requirements and the lack of continuous training for workers in this field. There is also an urgent need to develop more effective mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing work accidents and injuries, and to strengthen cooperation between government agencies and private institutions to unify efforts and achieve sustainability in the application of occupational safety and health standards. Furthermore, development efforts must include all labor sectors, including the informal sector, to ensure the provision of necessary protection for all categories of workers, thereby contributing to the reduction of accidents and the achievement of a safer work environment.

Wages

Wages are the fundamental pillar for achieving decent work and one of the most important standards of economic and social justice. However, the reality of the Jordanian labor market still exhibits significant imbalances in wage levels, their adequacy, and fairness, which has led to declining living standards for wide segments of workers and their families and has increased the gap between various economic groups.

In terms of legal compliance, the Jordanian Labor Law stipulates that wages must be paid within no more than seven days from the due date, with no deductions allowed except in specific legal cases. Nevertheless, reports reveal the widespread prevalence of violations related to delayed wage payments or non-compliance with the minimum wage, as wage-related complaints accounted for approximately 49.4% of the total complaints registered on the “Hemaya” platform. This reflects the importance of taking more deterrent measures and adopting non-traditional monitoring methods using technologies that ensure broader and more accurate oversight.

As of the beginning of 2025, the minimum wage was raised to 290 Jordanian dinars per month after remaining stable for nearly five years at 260 dinars. This increase was based on a review of the cumulative inflation rates for the period from 2021 to 2024. However, relying solely on inflation as a criterion for determining the minimum wage overlooked the gap between the average price increase and the actual cost of living, which includes food, housing, transportation, health, and education costs that have risen at much higher rates than the general inflation rate.

Data indicates that the average cost of living for just one person, excluding rent costs, is approximately 350 dinars per month, while monthly rent ranges between 200 and 300 dinars. This confirms that the new minimum wage does not cover even the minimum basic living needs of an individual, let alone the needs of families, as official estimates indicate that the poverty line for a family is about 480 dinars, while World Bank reports estimate it at approximately 800 dinars per month.

Despite the importance of the step to raise the minimum wage, the exclusion of some categories from its application—such as domestic workers and garment factory workers—raises serious concerns regarding the achievement of justice and the protection of the most vulnerable groups. These workers already suffer from harsh working conditions and low wages, and they should have been included in the wage increase decisions for humanitarian and social considerations in line with the principles of justice and non-discrimination stipulated in international agreements.

Data from 2024 indicates that more than one-third of workers in Jordan receive wages that are equal to or below the minimum wage, with high rates among women and non-Jordanian workers. For example, the percentage of Jordanian women earning less than 299 dinars is approximately

22.8%, while this percentage reaches 83.2% among non-Jordanian women. Additionally, about 64.7% of non-Jordanian men earn wages below 299 dinars, reflecting the concentration of poverty and low wages within these groups.

Economic analyses confirm that raising the minimum wage, if done according to fair standards based on actual living costs, would not constitute a significant burden on the national economy. In fact, it could contribute to stimulating economic growth by enhancing households' purchasing power, reducing poverty rates, and achieving social stability. International experiences indicate that wage increases help improve productivity, reduce labor turnover, and increase domestic demand for goods and services, thereby supporting gross domestic product (GDP).

While international standards stipulate that the minimum wage should range between 50% to 60% of the average wage, the average wage in Jordan is approximately 627 dinars, meaning that a fair minimum wage should have ranged between 313 and 376 dinars to achieve genuine social and economic balance.

Arab Labor Convention No. 15 on Determining and Protecting the Minimum Wage

In 2023, Jordan ratified the Arab Labor Convention No. 15 on Determining and Protecting the Minimum Wage, which obligates ratifying countries to review the minimum wage periodically, at least once every year, to ensure its alignment with economic and living changes.

However, the recent decision issued by the Tripartite Labor Committee, which raised the minimum wage to 290 dinars starting from the beginning of 2025, included fixing this amount for three years without regular annual review. This constitutes a clear violation of the provisions of the convention, as international treaties ratified by Jordan are, according to the constitution and prevailing judicial interpretations, superior to national legislation and have priority in application.

In light of these indicators, it is necessary to reconsider the methodology for determining the minimum wage periodically and annually, ensuring that it is based on actual living cost indicators and not solely on inflation rates. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that all worker categories are included without exception and to strengthen monitoring and grievance mechanisms to guarantee the effective implementation of the minimum wage, thereby ensuring the achievement of social justice and the protection of the economic rights of the most vulnerable groups in the Jordanian labor market.

Wages of Private Education Sector Teachers

The private education sector is among the most prominent sectors experiencing violations in the application of wage standards, particularly regarding the rights of female teachers working in it. Efforts were made during 2024 and 2025 to strengthen the protection of this group through the

activation of the “Unified Contract” for employees in private schools and kindergartens, which was signed under the collective agreement between the General Union of Private School Owners and the General Union of Workers in Private Education.

The International Labour Organization, in cooperation with the “Stand with the Teacher” campaign and a number of social partners, launched the “Tamayouz” program, which aimed to improve the working conditions of female teachers by raising awareness of labor rights and automating contracts to ensure compliance with decent work standards, particularly concerning fair wages, electronic salary transfers, and social protection coverage.

These initiatives coincided with the decision to raise the minimum wage to 290 dinars starting from the beginning of 2025, representing an additional step toward formalizing the rights of teachers. However, the gap remains, especially with some schools continuing to circumvent official contracts or manipulate bank transfers, which necessitates strengthening monitoring efforts and expanding awareness of reporting and redress mechanisms.

The importance of continuing efforts to fully implement the unified contract across all private schools in all governorates stands out, ensuring their compliance with the agreed-upon standards to create a fairer work environment for female teachers and enhance women’s economic empowerment in the private education sector, which is one of the country’s vital and socially and economically impactful sectors.

Working Hours

The regulation of working hours is one of the pillars of decent work and is directly linked to quality of life, workers’ well-being, and economic productivity. The Jordanian Labor Law sets the number of weekly working hours at 48 hours, with eight hours per day over six days a week. It also stipulates that the worker must be granted a paid weekly rest day, and they cannot be required to work overtime or on holidays without prior consent and double financial compensation.

Survey reports and official data have revealed that a large percentage of workers work beyond the legally set hours, especially in the private sector and informal sectors. Statistics indicate that about 36.8% of workers in Jordan work more than 49 hours per week, and this percentage rises to 62.6% among non-Jordanian workers, indicating the exploitation of overtime hours without adequate legal compliance.

Labor complaints related to working hours and associated violations have also shown concerning indicators. Complaints related to forced labor, working hours, and vacations accounted for about 5.8% of the total complaints recorded on the “Hemaya” platform, in addition to complaints related to overtime pay and annual leave. These figures—even though underreporting exists due to

workers' fears of dismissal or punishment—indicate deep imbalances in adherence to legal working hours, especially in small enterprises, informal sectors, and sectors lacking union representation and effective oversight.

Another gap is evident concerning leave entitlements. The law stipulates the worker's right to paid annual leave (14 days for those who have served less than five years and 21 days for those who have exceeded that), in addition to sick leave of up to 14 days, extendable for the same period if hospitalization is required. Some indicators show that a significant proportion of workers are effectively unable to benefit from these rights due to the practices of some employers.

As for night work and work on official holidays, although there are governing rules to determine their wages, available data shows disparities in applying these provisions, with many workers not receiving fair compensation for overtime or night work.

Ensuring the right to fair working hours cannot be achieved without developing the labor inspection system, empowering workers with complaint and protection mechanisms, and working on linking the legal regulation of working hours to factors such as the cost of living, safe working environments, and the disparities between the public and private sectors that affect job choices and make the private sector less socially attractive despite its economic importance.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

1- Legal Framework and International Commitments

The principle of equality in employment opportunities and in pay for work of equal value is one of the fundamental principles of decent work. Since the 1960s, Jordan has ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions that regulate this principle, which are considered core conventions—namely, Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation).

Nevertheless, the Labor Law has remained deficient in fully implementing these principles. It did not address wage discrimination until the 2019 amendment, which was limited to prohibiting wage discrimination solely on the basis of sex. It was not until the 2023 amendment that a new provision was introduced prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex among workers that would undermine equal opportunities.

However, both provisions were brief and unenforceable; no lawsuit has been filed nor has any complaint been submitted on their basis, and the labor inspection department has not taken any action against any employer or institution under either of them. This indicates that the legal provisions are deficient in their practical applicability due to the absence of enforcement tools and

objective standards for measuring discrimination. This is compounded by the lack of supporting provisions that establish rules for job evaluation for the purpose of enforcing pay equality, or rules for determining the nature of violations that constitute harm to equal opportunities—not to mention that these provisions were limited only to sex-based discrimination and did not address other forms of discrimination covered by the ratified international conventions.

2- The Reality of the Gender Pay Gap

Data indicates that the wage gap between men and women reaches 16% in both the public and private sectors, with the average wage for men in the private sector being approximately 515 dinars per month compared to 443 dinars for women. In the public sector, the average wage for men is 679 dinars versus 585 dinars for women. This reflects a disparity attributable to non-objective reasons and undermines the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value,” as enshrined in the international conventions ratified by Jordan.

Data shows that about 14.4% of women working in the private sector earn wages below 200 dinars, and 25.7% earn between 200 and 299 dinars, while the percentage of men earning below 200 dinars is only 7.3%.

This disparity deepens among non-Jordanian workers, where 41.4% of non-Jordanian women earn wages below 200 dinars, and the percentage rises to over 83% for those earning less than 299 dinars, revealing compounded inequality based on both gender and nationality.

The wage gap is particularly concentrated in craft occupations within the private sector, where the gap reaches 91% in favor of men—one of the highest recorded rates. In the public sector, within the category of legislators and senior administrative employees, the gap is 37.7%. These gaps are attributed to a set of structural causes, most notably: implicit discrimination in granting allowances related to marital or family status (such as dependency or housing allowances), the dominance of traditional concepts about the “male breadwinner,” and family responsibilities that affect women’s ability to engage in the workplace, advance in their careers, and participate in training and development programs.

It is also observed that women are concentrated in specific traditional sectors with low wages, such as education and health, and they often occupy lower-level professional positions, which further weakens their bargaining power. Figures show that the average income in the public sector is 29% higher than in the private sector, prompting many women to prefer the public sector despite its limited employment opportunities—providing no more than 8,000 opportunities annually compared to more than 130,000 new job seekers each year—which weakens women’s economic empowerment prospects.

3- The Wage Gap Between the Public and Private Sectors

In addition to the gender gap, there is another gap between the public and private sectors. The average wages of public sector employees are 29% higher than those in the private sector, despite the limited job opportunities in the public sector, which leads many Jordanians to prefer it for relative job stability.

The persistence of wage discrimination—whether between genders or between workers in the public and private sectors—represents a profound imbalance in the labor market and is inconsistent with the principles of justice and equality. It also weakens women’s economic participation and doubles the challenges faced by families in meeting living needs.

Additionally, although the private sector has the capacity to absorb the largest proportion of new job seekers, it does not match that capacity with an equal ability to provide a fair working environment for women in several professional sectors compared to the public sector, which leads women to prefer working in the public sector in many cases.

4- Causes of the Wage Gap and Inequality

The large wage gaps are attributed to several structural factors, most notably the continued gender-based discrimination in determining wages and allowances, especially those related to family status, such as dependency and housing allowances. In addition, traditional perceptions that view the man as the “sole breadwinner” weaken recognition of women’s economic responsibilities. Women’s concentration in traditional, low-wage sectors such as education and healthcare, combined with their limited advancement into senior positions due to the absence of institutional support and family responsibilities, further reduces their opportunities for training and promotion.

5- The Economic and Social Impact of the Wage Gap

Estimates suggest that achieving wage equality could lead to a direct increase in GDP by raising households’ purchasing power. Each woman’s income added to the labor market, combined with fair pay, could contribute up to 13,000 dinars annually to the national economy. Moreover, achieving wage justice helps improve quality of life and promotes inclusive economic growth.

The continued wage gap not only represents a violation of the principle of social justice but also weakens women’s economic participation, increasing the economic burdens on Jordanian families. The absence of a supportive work environment for equality exacerbates the problem of women withdrawing from the labor market, particularly in the private sector, amid some of the lowest female economic participation rates globally.

6- Requirements for Reducing Discrimination

In light of this reality, there is a need to activate the newly introduced provisions in the Labor Law that prohibit wage discrimination and discrimination undermining equal opportunities on the basis

of sex, and to expand their scope to include all forms of discrimination and all categories of workers. It is necessary to develop objective standards for job evaluation based on effort, qualifications, responsibility, and working conditions to enable employers to adhere to wage equality rules and allow labor inspection bodies and the judiciary to monitor compliance with these rules.

Moreover, it is essential to enhance the supportive environment for working women by improving transportation, providing childcare facilities, and expanding the implementation of the flexible work system, which has so far had limited impact. Additionally, trade unions should be engaged in collective bargaining to help address wage disparities, particularly at the sectoral level.

Achieving equality and non-discrimination in the labor market requires a comprehensive review of relevant legislation, addressing legal gaps that undermine the effectiveness of provisions prohibiting wage discrimination based on sex, introducing legal provisions that prohibit all other forms of discrimination, strengthening compliance monitoring mechanisms, enabling institutions to implement equal opportunity measures, and expanding incentives for sustained women's employment, including flexible working hours, protection from dismissal, and financial incentives for employers who adhere to actual equality.

7- Equality at Work Project (2024–2027)

The launch of the “Equality at Work: Toward a Safe and Inclusive Workforce in Jordan” project by the International Labour Organization in cooperation with the Jordanian government represents a significant strategic step within national efforts to promote a decent work environment and ensure gender equality in the Jordanian labor market.

The project aims to promote equal opportunities between women and men in the labor market, improve working conditions to ensure social protection and labor rights, and establish the principle of non-discrimination based on sex or any other grounds. It also seeks to support effective partnerships between the government, employers, and workers, and to strengthen social dialogue as a tool for building fairer and more inclusive labor market policies.

The importance of this project lies in its role as a practical platform for translating national and international commitments into tangible interventions. It not only focuses on enhancing the legislative framework but also emphasizes changing institutional culture and practices in workplaces through intensive awareness campaigns, capacity-building, and the development of practical tools to ensure the implementation of equality standards.

During 2024 and early 2025, the project achieved a range of concrete results, most notably the launch of national awareness campaigns to enhance knowledge of labor rights, particularly those related to equality and non-discrimination; the activation of the unified contracts platform in the

private education sector to ensure transparency and job stability for female teachers; and the development of the capacities of female workers in private schools through specialized training programs. It also encouraged schools that adhere to fair labor standards to improve their work environments and enhance women's career advancement opportunities.

There remain many tasks to be addressed in the next phase of the project, chief among them strengthening monitoring mechanisms for the application of equality standards in workplaces, expanding the reach of protection and support programs to female workers in informal sectors, and continuing to promote women's representation in leadership and union positions to ensure their genuine and effective participation in shaping labor policies.

Child Labor

Unofficial estimates based on cross-referenced data from local and international organizations indicate that the number of child laborers in Jordan exceeds 100,000, representing an increase of no less than 25% compared to the last child labor survey conducted in Jordan in 2016. More than 60% of these children are engaged in work classified as hazardous, while about 48% are exposed to materials or working conditions that negatively affect their health and safety. Approximately 19% suffer from mistreatment, including humiliation, physical or verbal violence.

The gravity of these conditions is reflected in the fact that 45% of children work hours exceeding the legally permitted limit, depriving them of their right to education and normal psychological and social development, and increasing the likelihood of chronic health problems and psychological disorders.

The sectors that most absorb working children are, primarily: agriculture (32%), trade and vehicle repair (28%), industry (11%), and construction (9%). These are sectors characterized by manual, low-wage work that often lacks even the most basic occupational safety and health standards, especially in peripheral and rural areas.

Despite the adoption of the “National Strategy to Reduce Child Labor (2022–2030),” there is a notable absence of periodic evaluation mechanisms to assess its effectiveness and a lack of updated performance indicators. On the inspection side, the Ministry of Labor annually records fewer than 500 cases of child labor, or less than 0.5% of total estimates. In fact, the Ministry of Labor's report on labor inspection and occupational safety and health achievements for 2024 indicated that the number of child labor cases detected that year was only 294, with 201 warnings issued to employers and 181 violations recorded. This reflects the fragility of the inspection system and its inability to reach workplaces where such violations occur, which is attributed to the shortage of inspectors, weak training, and the limited resources allocated to this issue.

The root causes of the phenomenon are poverty and adult unemployment, which are identified as the primary reasons for child labor in all studies. These factors are behind the vast majority of child labor cases in Jordan, as in many other countries. Other contributing factors include the declining quality of education and the absence of comprehensive social protection. Families unable to secure their basic needs often resort to sending their children into the labor market, especially given the weak coverage of cash support programs and quality free education.

A range of measures can serve as a roadmap to combat the phenomenon, most notably: regularly updating statistics, evaluating the national strategy to reduce child labor, strengthening the inspection system, developing monitoring tools, linking monitoring with social support programs, enhancing free education, launching large-scale community awareness campaigns, and conducting an effective and comprehensive review of the national strategy while expanding partnerships with civil society organizations and local communities.

At the preventive level, economically empowering families forms the cornerstone for reducing their reliance on child labor, as family poverty is, according to various studies, the primary factor behind children's dropout into the labor market. Improving school environments and education quality, closely linking them with protection programs, and providing extracurricular activities and rehabilitation programs for at-risk children are also critical.

Migrant Labor

Migrant workers constitute a central pillar of the Jordanian labor market and are distributed across key sectors such as agriculture, construction, services, and domestic work. While Jordan has established a legal framework regulating their entry and work permits, many challenges related to their fundamental rights remain, creating a real gap between legal texts and practical reality, especially with the continued application of the sponsorship (kafala) system and the involvement of multiple regulatory entities without effective coordination among them.

1- Absence of a Unified Database

One of the most prominent issues hindering the management of this file is the absence of a comprehensive and unified database on migrant labor in Jordan, as well as conflicting figures issued by official entities. While in past years the Ministry of Labor announced that the number of migrant workers in Jordan exceeded one million—both those with permits and those in violation of regulations—one former minister even publicly claimed that their number equaled that of Jordanian workers. More recently, however, ministry estimates suggest their number does not exceed 400,000 workers, whether with permits or not. This significant disparity in estimates reflects the scale of the challenge arising from the lack of institutional coordination and imposes

constraints on policymakers' ability to develop effective employment and migration policies or to design protection programs based on accurate data.

Migrant labor is primarily concentrated in sectors that are less attractive to Jordanians due to low wages and poor working conditions, such as agriculture and domestic work, where large numbers work without clear contracts or under nominal permits. Studies estimate that a large proportion of these workers are not covered by social security, either due to explicit exclusion, as in the case of domestic workers, or due to regulatory loopholes, as in the agricultural sector, where the decision to include them has yet to be implemented despite the issuance of the Agricultural Workers Regulation in 2021.

2- The Sponsorship System

What further exacerbates the vulnerability of migrant workers is the continued application of the sponsorship (kafala) system, which ties the worker to the employer ("sponsor") in all legal procedures, including the issuance or renewal of residency and the ability to leave the country. This system grants the employer excessive powers, such as withholding passports, preventing the transfer to other jobs, or threatening deportation. It creates a dependency relationship that deprives the worker of freedom and the ability to seek redress. The sponsorship system has been widely criticized by international organizations and human rights groups, which have considered it one of the main drivers of exploitation and abuse in labor relations. Calls for the complete abolition of the sponsorship system and its replacement with direct employment contracts based on the worker's free will—which allow labor mobility within legal frameworks that respect dignity and independence while balancing rights and obligations—have become urgent.

3- Trade Union Organization

The situation of migrant workers in Jordan continues to suffer from a significant gap regarding trade union rights, as the existing legislative framework deprives migrant workers of the right to establish labor unions that genuinely represent them. It also prohibits them from running for leadership positions within existing unions, despite the fact that they form the backbone of many vital sectors such as cleaning, agriculture, and manufacturing, and play essential roles in supporting the national economy. As a result of these legal restrictions, migrant workers remain in a vulnerable position, unable to effectively defend their rights or engage in collective bargaining to improve their working conditions.

This dilemma is linked to a broader problem concerning the structure of trade union organization in Jordan in general, where the establishment of new unions is restricted by a decision of the Minister of Labor, without a mechanism allowing workers in various sectors the freedom to establish their own unions in accordance with the standards of freedom of association stipulated in International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. The number of officially recognized

labor unions has remained limited to just 17 unions for decades, without any increase to keep pace with economic transformations or changes in the labor market structure, despite the emergence of new sectors and the significant expansion of others.

This restriction has led to the absence of union representation in many vital sectors employing thousands of workers, including sectors heavily reliant on migrant labor such as agriculture and domestic work. Recently, domestic workers were brought under the umbrella of the General Union of Public Services Workers, and agricultural workers under the General Union of Food Industry Workers. However, this has not been a sufficient solution, as these sectors, given their size, nature, and specificity, require specialized unions that directly and effectively represent the interests of their workers and address their particular issues, such as working conditions, social coverage, and protection from exploitation.

4- Domestic Workers

Domestic workers face clear legal and procedural discrimination, as the Social Security Law explicitly excludes them from any form of protection. They are also deprived of the right to end-of-service benefits and suffer from the absence of effective mechanisms for dispute resolution or effective inspection of their conditions. Practices such as passport confiscation, wage payment delays, and mistreatment persist without effective oversight.

5- Agricultural Workers System

The agricultural sector is one of the key sectors heavily reliant on migrant and refugee labor, with these workers constituting a significant part of the workforce in this vital economic and social domain. Despite the importance of this sector, working conditions within it continue to face serious challenges, particularly regarding workers' rights and social protection.

Until recently, the Agricultural Workers Regulation issued in 2021 excluded from several of its provisions workers employed by employers with three or fewer workers. This loophole encouraged some agricultural employers to avoid registering workers with social security by keeping the number of their workers below three, thereby benefiting from the legislative exception that deprived these workers of basic rights such as social security, leave entitlements, and regulated working hours. Furthermore, the nature of agricultural work, which often requires continuous movement between multiple employers, placed many migrant workers in a legally ambiguous situation, exacerbating their vulnerability and exposing them to the risk of exploitation.

The year 2025 witnessed a significant shift with the issuance of the amended Agricultural Workers Regulation, which repealed Article (15) of the regulation that had excluded workers employed by employers with three or fewer workers from several rights. This effectively ended the exemption that had deprived a large segment of workers of their fundamental rights.

Although these amendments represent a positive step toward improving the agricultural work environment and ensuring the protection of workers, challenges remain, particularly in implementing these provisions and expanding labor inspection coverage of agricultural workplaces to ensure compliance. There is also an urgent need to develop clear instructions for including agricultural workers who move between multiple employers in the social security system in a flexible and fair manner, protecting them from exploitation and ensuring the sustainability of their social protection.

6- Paths Forward

Improving the conditions of migrant workers in Jordan requires adopting a package of practical recommendations, most notably the complete abolition of the sponsorship system and its replacement with a fair contractual system that guarantees migrant workers the freedom to move and change employers without requiring sponsor approval; unifying national data on migrant labor across all relevant entities; issuing accurate and transparent periodic reports on their numbers, employment sectors, and characteristics; gradually extending social security coverage to migrant workers, particularly in the agricultural and domestic sectors, while removing legal and administrative barriers; eliminating legal discrimination against domestic workers; amending legislation to ensure their inclusion under labor law and social security protections; and granting migrant workers the right to organize and to labor representation, ensuring their participation in negotiation bodies and labor councils in line with relevant international conventions.

It is also essential to strengthen and train the labor inspection system to monitor migrant labor conditions, enable effective access to closed workplaces such as homes and farms, establish service centers and legal aid facilities for migrant workers in their native languages, provide effective, confidential, and independent grievance mechanisms, and launch a national awareness campaign targeting both employers and workers to educate them on rights and responsibilities and to encourage formal registration and compliance with the law.

The Right to Freedom of Association

The right to freedom of association is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed under International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and a central pillar of decent work standards. Despite some positive steps taken by Jordan to strengthen trade union freedoms, the legislative and implementation framework still exhibits a number of imbalances that hinder workers' full enjoyment of this right, as clearly reflected in reports by international monitoring bodies such as the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, the ILO Committee of Experts, and the Arab Trade Union Confederation reports.

Jordan has not yet ratified Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, which is one of the ILO's core conventions. Although Jordan is a party to Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, the absence of ratification of Convention No. 87 represents a key gap in the legal framework governing trade union rights. The ILO Committee of Experts has repeatedly called on the Jordanian government to move forward with ratification of this convention as a fundamental step toward aligning national legislation with international standards.

Legislative Restrictions on Union Formation

Article (98) of the Jordanian Labor Law restricts the formation of labor unions to 17 specified economic sectors approved by the Ministry of Labor. This effectively means that any group of workers who do not belong to these sectors or are not included in this list are deprived of the right to organize. According to Paragraph (d) of the same article, the Minister of Labor holds the authority to determine these sectors in a closed list and allows for only one union in each sector. This restriction not only creates a monopoly over union activities but also deprives hundreds of thousands of workers—especially in emerging or unclassified sectors—of the ability to establish or join unions representing their interests. Additionally, the Jordanian legal framework still does not allow for union pluralism within the same sector, in violation of the principle of union pluralism.

The government also refuses to register or recognize independent unions. ILO documents point to multiple complaints from such unions whose registration requests have been ignored, which has been considered an undermining of workers' right to freely and independently choose their representatives.

In its annual report on “Application of International Labour Standards 2025,” the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards explicitly called for the repeal of Article 98(d) of the Jordanian Labor Law, stressing that it is inconsistent with the principles of international conventions ratified by Jordan—specifically, Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Convention No. 98 on Collective Bargaining. The Committee stated that this restriction constitutes a violation of workers' fundamental rights and undermines union pluralism, urging the Jordanian government to take urgent measures to abolish the said provision and expand legal protections to include all workers regardless of sector or nature of work.

Interference in Union Affairs

The Jordanian Labor Law grants the Minister of Labor the authority to dissolve the administrative bodies of unions and appoint temporary committees to manage them. The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers such intervention by the executive authority a violation of union independence and inconsistent with international standards, which stipulate that union affairs

should be managed through internal democratic processes without external interference. Additionally, the Labor Law requires the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions and labor unions to obtain Ministry of Labor approval for their internal bylaws, a provision that allows interference in the unions' internationally protected right to establish their own internal rules independently.

Deprivation of Broad Groups from Union Organization

International reports indicate that migrant workers—although allowed to join unions—are not permitted to establish their own unions or hold leadership positions within existing unions. The ILO considers this discrimination a breach of the principle of equality in the enjoyment of trade union rights and has called for legislative amendments to ensure that migrant workers enjoy the same rights as their Jordanian counterparts.

Moreover, Jordanian law prohibits public sector employees from forming unions or participating in collective bargaining. The ILO views this prohibition as a violation of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, especially given Jordan's ratification of Convention No. 98. The ILO Committee has called on the government to amend legislation to guarantee these rights for all workers, including those in the public sector.

In addition, workers between the ages of 16 and 18 are barred from joining unions, even though the law permits them to work at that age, leaving them in a vulnerable position without union protection. The ILO has urged Jordan to align the legal age for union membership with the legal age for entering the labor market.

Weak Protection Mechanisms and Lack of Deterrence

Despite instances of union representatives being dismissed or threatened due to their activities, the penalties stipulated in the law do not constitute a real deterrent, pushing many workers to refrain from union activity out of fear of retaliation or losing their livelihood. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has called for stricter penalties and the strengthening of legal and administrative enforcement mechanisms to ensure the protection of unionists.

Restrictions on Collective Bargaining

In Jordan, collective bargaining remains effectively limited to officially recognized unions, depriving wide groups of workers of a fundamental mechanism to improve their working conditions. The ILO has recommended expanding the scope of collective bargaining to include all forms of workers' representation and ensuring the effective participation of these groups in collective negotiations over wages, working hours, and social protection.

Reform Initiative to Strengthen Union Organization

In August 2024, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions launched the “General Federation Reform Document,” marking a serious move toward internal reform in response to the escalating economic and social challenges facing workers, particularly rising unemployment, the expansion of the informal labor sector, and weak social protection.

The document boldly diagnoses the structural deficiencies in the performance of the federation and its member unions, including weak governance, poor democratic practices, declining union membership, financial dependence on the government, lack of effective internal and external coordination, and the federation’s limited role in defending workers’ rights.

The document proposes a comprehensive reform plan aimed at strengthening independence, democratic representation, activating collective bargaining mechanisms, expanding membership, improving communication with workers, and reforming the legal framework governing union work to align with international standards.

This reform-oriented approach represents an important step toward enabling the General Federation to play a more effective union role, thereby enhancing the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining as a key pillar of decent work in Jordan.

Labor Legislation

A review of the state of labor legislation in Jordan during 2024 up to the present reveals that the government’s introduction of draft amendments to the Labor Law and the Social Security Law was the most prominent legislative event, given the widespread controversy and opposition it sparked from trade unions, civil society organizations, numerous experts, and political parties. These actors considered that the proposed amendments, despite containing some partial positive elements, suffer from a fundamental shortcoming in their preparation methodology, as they were not based on comprehensive studies, social dialogue, or tripartite consultations between the production parties, but rather came as the result of individual initiatives by some decision-makers, lacking the foundations of sound legislation.

This recurring pattern of fragmented proposals without an integrated vision casts a negative shadow on the stability of labor legislation and harms labor relations, especially considering that the last amendment to the Labor Law had been enacted only a year earlier (2023), following a wide-ranging amendment in 2019, which undermines the credibility of the legislative process and reinforces the sense of legal instability.

While the government drafts included some positive amendments—such as extending maternity leave to 90 days, prohibiting the dismissal of pregnant women, and introducing bereavement leave—they also contained clear threats to workers’ rights. Most notably, the proposal regarding

Article 31 of the Labor Law, which would have allowed up to 15% of workers to be dismissed annually without judicial oversight or effective guarantees, an amendment that the Parliamentary Labor Committee rejected due to its danger to labor market stability. Similarly, the proposed amendment to Article 108 was met with rejection, as it would have eliminated the legal protection granted to union representatives against arbitrary dismissal, undermining the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

As for the Social Security Law, a government approach emerged to transform the unemployment insurance from a savings-based model to a solidarity-based model. While this is a positive direction in principle, it was flawed in its distribution of financial burdens, as the worker would bear twice the employer's contribution without guaranteeing a minimum unemployment benefit sufficient to cover basic living costs, which sparked widespread objections. Furthermore, the delegation of authority to the executive branch to regulate the details of flexible work coverage without clear legal safeguards was criticized by experts as it poses a threat of further legal and social fragility.

The repeated introduction of fragmented amendments without genuine social dialogue does not align with the requirements of real legislative reform and undermines the prospects of strengthening fundamental labor rights. Therefore, any process of labor law reform must be based on a comprehensive and participatory approach grounded in in-depth studies, with the involvement of all production parties, to ensure fairness and stability in labor relations and to achieve sustainable development.

Legislation Issued in 2024

The year 2024 witnessed notable activity in issuing a number of regulations, instructions, and decisions based on the Labor Law, as part of the ongoing approach to reviewing this level of legislation, which began in 2023.

Two main regulations were issued during 2024. The first is Flexible Work Regulation No. (44) of 2024, which aims to increase employment rates, reduce unemployment, and create a suitable work environment for women, persons with disabilities, and individuals with family responsibilities. The second is Licensing Regulation for Brokerage Companies for Employing Jordanians Inside and Outside the Kingdom No. (35) of 2024, which specifically aims to regulate the affairs of private offices that employ Jordanians inside and outside the Kingdom.

Additionally, the Instructions for Recruitment Agencies Working to Bring Non-Jordanian Domestic Workers of 2024 were issued, aiming to regulate and organize the domestic work sector and unify the procedures for recruiting domestic workers.

Several decisions were also issued related to occupational safety and health, including:

- A decision regarding medical first aid equipment and devices for workers in establishments for the year 2024, in line with the amendments to occupational safety and health regulations made in 2023.
- A decision approving the model of the occupational safety and health policy for employers with twenty or more workers for the year 2024, in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health and Prevention of Occupational Hazards in Institutions Regulation No. (31) of 2023.
- A decision approving the models for the register of reporting work accidents and injuries and the register of reporting occupational diseases for the year 2024, in line with the Regulation on the Formation of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and the Appointment of Supervisors in Establishments No. (33) of 2023.
- A decision regarding the occupational safety and health records that the employer is required to maintain for the year 2024, based on the Regulation on the Formation of Occupational Safety and Health Committees No. (33) of 2023 and the Instructions for Identifying Types of Occupational Hazards of 2023.
- Additionally, a decision was issued to cancel the decision related to the level and authorities responsible for training occupational safety and health supervisors in establishments, in line with the Regulation on the Formation of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and the Appointment of Supervisors in Establishments No. (33) of 2023.

Working Women

The year 2024 witnessed significant progress in the policies and programs aimed at enhancing the participation of Jordanian women in the labor market and improving their legal and social conditions. However, many structural challenges still exist, hindering the achievement of balanced and sustainable participation of women in economic activity. While some indicators recorded relative improvement, fundamental imbalances persisted in the landscape of women's work, whether in terms of economic participation, working conditions, or available opportunities.

Legislative Framework

The amendments proposed by the government to the Labor Law in 2024 are still under consideration in Parliament. These included a package of important amendments to support the rights of working women, including increasing maternity leave from 70 days to 90 days, prohibiting the dismissal of pregnant women during the entire pregnancy period, and improving the wording of the definition of gender-based wage discrimination in Article 2 of the law.

Women's Participation in the Labor Market and Contractual Relationship Regulation

In 2024, the electronic unified contract platform for workers in private schools and kindergartens was activated, where 1,342 schools were registered, and 20,985 unified contracts were concluded, aiming to help enhance contractual protection for female workers. The duration of the unified contract was also extended to 12 months, which could contribute to achieving greater job stability.

However, the reality still shows tangible gaps in the rights of working women in the private education sector, as they continue to be subjected to exploitative practices, particularly in wages, weak compliance with the unified contract terms, and weak effective monitoring mechanisms for its implementation.

In other sectors such as agriculture and domestic work, female workers remain vulnerable to the absence of legal and social protections, including poor working conditions, exclusion from social security coverage, and continued work for low wages under fragile working conditions.

Women and Entrepreneurship

The year 2024 also witnessed the issuance of an official definition for enterprises owned or managed by women, which is considered a positive step to support women's entrepreneurship and provide affirmative distinction in economic policies. Additionally, incentive instructions were issued to promote women's participation in government procurement.

However, women still face difficulties in establishing projects, accessing financing, and fully benefiting from available economic opportunities. Women's participation in entrepreneurship remains low compared to men, and women-led projects suffer from higher rates of early closure due to issues related to weak financing and legal protection.

Social Protection for Working Mothers

The year 2024 witnessed an expansion in social protection programs, as approximately 20,000 working women benefited from the childcare cost support program, whether in nurseries or at home. Additionally, 336 nurseries benefited from the operational cost support program, which helped transfer many female workers from the informal to the formal sector. However, the issuance of Social Protection Regulation No. 74 of 2024, which canceled the nurseries' benefit from the operational cost support program, raised concerns about the sustainability of these vital programs.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) recommended in 2024 the adoption of measures to strengthen the social protection of working mothers and ensure the sustainability of nursery services in Jordan. The recommendations included extending the benefit period of the "Raya'a" program, which covers childcare costs beyond the current six-month limit, to support the continued participation of women in the labor market, especially those with limited incomes.

The organization also called for the development of the nursery operational cost support program by continuing to cover the wages of nursery workers and their social security contributions, as well as reformulating the program to clarify its nature as part of social protections. This would include issuing regulations to ensure the sustainability of nurseries and their gradual transition toward self-reliance, thus preserving the quality of care and promoting the integration of these institutions into the formal economy.

Medical Coverage under Maternity Insurance

International Labour Convention No. 102 of 1952 stipulates that maternity insurance should include medical care related to pregnancy and childbirth, including medical examinations and prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care, and that these services should be provided free of charge or at a reasonable cost. However, the Jordanian reality reveals a gap in this regard, as maternity insurance under the Social Security Law is limited to providing a cash benefit to mothers during maternity leave, without covering the medical expenses associated with pregnancy and childbirth. This negatively impacts the level of comprehensive social protection that women should enjoy according to international standards.

Flexible Work and Policies to Protect Against Violence and Harassment

Flexible Work Regulation No. 44 of 2024 was issued, allowing flexible work arrangements such as remote work or part-time work, representing an important support for women. Additionally, the Social Security Corporation launched the Policy on Protection from Violence and Harassment in the Workplace and the platform “Know More About Prevention and Protection” to promote a safe work environment.

However, the actual benefit from flexible work arrangements remains limited due to weak institutional commitment and the absence of incentives for employers, while the legal texts still lack an explicit and comprehensive criminalization of sexual harassment at work.

Empowering Women in Decision-Making Positions

The government issued corporate governance instructions requiring at least 20% female representation on the boards of major companies. It also allocated opportunities for small and medium-sized women-owned enterprises in government procurement. Nevertheless, the percentage of women in leadership and senior management positions remains very low, not exceeding 8.5% of total middle and senior management positions, as women face structural barriers related to implicit discrimination, family burdens, and weak institutional support for career advancement paths.

International Indicators and Ongoing Challenges

Jordan improved its ranking in several international indicators in 2024, advancing in the gender gap index in political empowerment and improving its score in the Women, Business, and the Law (WBL) Index. It also rose to 18th place globally in the Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Index.

However, women's participation rate in the labor force remains very low, staying at around 14% by the end of 2024, while the female unemployment rate remains significantly higher compared to men. The gender wage gap persists, estimated at around 16% in favor of men, with women concentrated in sectors with lower wages and weaker protections.

Women face accumulated challenges that hinder their full integration, most notably limited opportunities, low wages, the absence of a supportive work environment, weak enforcement of maternity-related rights and affirmative action, and a concentration in specific sectors such as education and healthcare. Early withdrawal from the labor market due to family circumstances or the work environment also remains common.

Recommendations

In light of the analysis provided by this report on the current reality of the Jordanian labor market and labor rights during 2024, and the structural and practical challenges it revealed in areas of employment, social protection, and economic empowerment of vulnerable groups, as well as the importance of developing the system of legislation and policies, the report recommends a set of measures and reforms aimed at achieving a real transformation toward decent work, enhancing social justice, and achieving economic stability. These recommendations are based on international labor standards, constitutional and national commitments, and aim to address gaps in protection and regulation, activating the labor market's role as a driver of inclusive and sustainable growth.

First: Developing Labor Market Policies and Increasing Job Creation Capacity

- Formulate an integrated national employment policy based on an updated database and quantitative indicators, focusing on stimulating labor-intensive sectoral growth, particularly in modern technology, tourism, renewable energy, and the food industries sectors.
- Allocate direct government support programs for small and medium enterprises as a key lever for job creation, especially in governorates and remote areas.
- Restructure vocational training policies to clearly link them to actual employment pathways, with the effective involvement of the private sector in designing and implementing training programs.
- Activate Youth Decent Work Programs, with the provision of tax incentives to employers who employ youth and women in decent and stable jobs.

Second: Reforming Legislation to Strengthen Workers' Protection and Inclusion in Rights

- Amend the Labor Law to expand its protection scope to include all categories of workers, including domestic workers and those in the informal economy.
- Review the legal provisions that restrict freedom of association (especially Article 98 of the Labor Law) to ensure trade union pluralism and the independence of labor organizations.
- Enact legislation that clearly prohibits all forms of discrimination in employment and work, including discrimination based on gender, disability, nationality, or age.
- Include the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike in legislation in line with International Conventions No. 87 and 98.

Third: Improving the Social Protection System and Working Conditions

- Link the minimum wage to cost-of-living indicators and review its value annually in a transparent manner through a tripartite mechanism.
- Launch a national program to gradually extend social security coverage to workers in the informal sectors, with the government covering part of the contributions for specified periods.
- Develop precise national standards for occupational health and safety, especially for high-risk sectors such as construction, agriculture, and factories, and expand the powers of labor inspection to effectively monitor their implementation.
- Support the provision of a flexible and inclusive work environment that takes into account workers' needs in terms of working hours, vacations, and childcare services.

Fourth: Empowering Vulnerable Groups Economically and Socially

- Prepare a comprehensive national plan to combat child labor, including preventive and monitoring measures, and educational reintegration and rehabilitation programs for those withdrawn from the labor market.
- Implement a national strategy to increase women's participation in the labor market, including reforms in leave policies, establishing workplace nurseries, and enhancing women-targeted training programs.
- Improve the working conditions of migrant workers and ensure they benefit from social protection, while abolishing all practices associated with the sponsorship (kafala) system that restrict workers' freedom.

- Provide special support to integrate persons with disabilities into the labor market through incentive policies for employers and by providing accessible work environments.

Fifth: Reforming Labor Rights Oversight Mechanisms

- Increase the number of labor inspectors to match the size of the labor market and provide them with specialized training in issues of discrimination, occupational health and safety, and child labor.
- Develop integrated digital systems to monitor inspection visits and their outcomes and link them to a national labor market database.
- Enhance the independence of the labor inspection apparatus while ensuring the transparency of publishing its annual reports.

Sixth: Activating Social Dialogue and Building Sustainable Partnerships

- Revive and activate both the Economic and Social Council and the Tripartite Committee on Labor Affairs as the main platform for regular social dialogue among social partners.
- Support capacity-building for trade unions and civil society organizations active in the labor field to enable them to effectively represent workers' interests.
- Develop permanent mechanisms for consulting social partners in formulating economic and social policies and ensure that the outcomes of dialogue are binding and linked to implementation policies.

Seventh: Improving Labor Market Governance and Data Management

- Establish a national labor market observatory responsible for collecting and analyzing data and providing periodic reports to support planning and policy evaluation.
- Develop a national electronic system for registering job seekers and linking them to employment opportunities, including tracking workers' career paths.
- Prepare comprehensive annual reports on the achievement of employment and decent work objectives in Jordan and publish them transparently to the public.